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William M. Gaines passed away June 3. The news media are covering his death as the loss of the creator of Alfred E. Neuman and *Mad Magazine*.

Never having met Mr. Gaines, I had to rely on others for impressions. From all reports, in the dictionary, under "eccentric," the entry reads, "see *Gaines, William*." He was apparently larger than life in every way. His death made the front page of the *New York Times* (Thursday, June 4, 1992), where the headline read "Publisher of *Mad* Dies." According to the obituary, "He was not a pinstripes-and-suspenders type but a shaggy, rumpled man in baggy trousers and stringy hair. that Mr. (Frank) Jacobs said was 'styled only by the force of gravity.'"

His influence on the American consciousness is immediately apparent to any of the millions of television viewers who have ever noted the prominently framed copies of *Mad* on Murphy Brown's office wall. More often than not, people who "didn't read comics as a kid" *did* pick up *Mad*. It was required reading for those who wanted to pass Life 101.

Upon his passing, the media will, for the most part, miss much of the way in which Gaines helped shape the entirety of the comics industry. Under his direction, the EC Comics line was one of the most diverse and imaginative ever seen. Most famous for their horror and science fiction titles like *Tales from the Crypt* and *Weird Science*, their books ran the full spectrum, from war adventure (*Two-Fisted Tales*) to hard-boiled crime (*Crime Suspen-Stories*) to swashbuckling action (*Piracy*). EC even had a medical title — *M.D.* One of my own favorites was the short-lived *Extra*, starring globe-trotting journalists.

EC brought us some of the most talented writers and artists ever gathered under one banner: Sergio Aragones, Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Mort Drucker, Frank Frazetta, Bernie Krigstein, Harvey Kurtzman, Joe Orlando, John Severin, Marie Severin, Al Williamson and Wally Wood, to name a few.

In all fairness to the media, I'm confident they *will* note the way Gaines fought the Kefauver Committee in the 1950's. It was during the McCarthy era that Gaines turned his attention toward *Mad*, and it began its climb toward becoming one of the best-selling humor magazines ever published.

Today, as comics strive to regain and expand the diversity they once took for granted, it's a good time to remember William Gaines, and to learn from him. Sample titles you might not have thought to sample, enjoy some of the more bizarre and experimental comics you find in your local comic shop.

Try new things. He certainly did.

On another somber note, Martin Goodman also passed away on Saturday, June 6, following a long illness. Mr. Goodman, a pulp magazines publisher during the 1930's, launched a line of comic books beginning with MARVEL COMICS #1, November 1939. He continued as the Timely/Atlas/Marvel Comics publisher well into the Marvel renaissance of the 1960's. Thus, it can truly be said that we have lost *two* of the most influential men in the history of comics.

An industry has to survive for a long time to lose as many notable individuals as we have. Given that comics were conceived as ephemera, not meant to last for any length of time, I'd say we've survived longer than any would have ever predicted. That's the finest tribute we can offer men like William Gaines and Martin Goodman.

— Steve Saffel
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Up Front

Happy, Happy! Joy, Joy!

ITEM! Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy! *Ren and Stimpy*, the outrageous Nickelodeon animated series, is coming to Marvel in a brand new monthly series chronicling the lunatic misadventures of the unlikely cat and chihuahua.

"Make it more outrageous than the cartoon," said Nickelodeon to REN & STIMPY Editor Fabian Nicieza, and he was more than happy to oblige. In "Ren and Stimpy Go Bad," the boys become a modern day version of Bonnie and Clyde; in "Alien Attack," it's an outer space adventure starring Commander Ren Hoek and Cadet Stimpy. And, to celebrate the comic book debut, REN & STIMPY #1 will be poly-bagged to contain special scratch-and-sniff "air foulers."

The absurdity will continue every month as the two become pizza delivery men in "Extra Cheesy, Thick and Crusty," in the western epic "Rodeo of Love," when Ren becomes a South American dictator in "El Supremo Ren," and in "Frankenstimpy," a horror story of the mad Dr. Ren and his monster creation. Regular features will include "Ask Dr. Stupid," "Stimpy's Storybook Land," "Powdered Toast Man" and "Sea Gorillas," insuring that Fabian and Co. (including writer Dan Slott and artist Mike Kazaleh) take the insane tone of the cartoon to new heights.

The Ren & Stimpy Show. TM & © 1992 Nickelodeon. All rights reserved.

ITEM! The second wave of the British Invasion is about to hit with four new projects from Marvel UK: DEATH'S HEAD II, BATTLETIDE, TEAM HELIX and DIGITEK.

The DEATH'S HEAD II ongoing monthly series slated to begin in October picks up where the limited series left off, courtesy of Dan Abnett, Liam Sharp, Andy Lanning and Cam Smith. Featuring a guest appearance by the X-Men, the premier issue begins after events chronicled in WARHEADS #5, when the cyborg known as Death's Head finds himself on Earth in a quiet, peaceful Mid-Western America, along with the mysterious, reality-warping Sapphire Lotus and his adorable side-kick, Tuck. The peace and quiet don't last, because the Lotus attracts the attention of several mean and quite deadly characters who want it for their own. The chaos that ensues presents a global threat that can only be stopped with the aid of the X-Men.

The BATTLETIDE four-part limited series by Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning, Geoff Senior and Martin Griffiths, also set for October, stars Death's Head and Killpower, the genetically-engineered assassin created by the corrupt Mys-Tech corporation to be the perfect killer, with guest appearances by Wolverine (unwillingly teamed with Sabretooth), the Hulk, the Thing and Captain America. Kidnapped by an alien race, Death's Head and Killpower find themselves transported to an intergalactic arena where they and their super powered guest stars face an army of blood-thirsty aliens in a tag-team duel to the death.

DIGITEK is a story of a human being transformed into a digitized, computer-generated warrior. Originally scheduled for summer release, it is Marvel UK's first fully-painted project and, as such, it presented a special challenge to the editors on the project. To solve the unexpected problems that arose, they decided that it was more important to take their time and insure a quality end result. As Editor John Freeman put it, "One of the advantages of being a relatively small operation is that we get to work very closely with our creative people (in this case writers John Tomlinson and Andy Lanning, and illustrator Dermot Power). The extra time allowed us to jointly iron out all the bugs and create something we're all very proud of." DIGITEK is now slated for October release.

Finally, in November, Wolverine will find himself alongside a new gang of genetically-altered malcontents in the four-issue limited series TEAM HELIX by Andy (PUNISHER) Lanning, Graham (MOTORMOUTH) Marks and Phil (DREADLANDS) Gascoine.

The promotional painting for the ongoing DEATH'S HEAD series (left) and Brian Hitch's character design for Prime Evil, the villain from Marvel UK's new TEAM HELIX limited series.

NEW YORK, July 24: Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc., and Fleer Corp., a major marketer of sports trading cards, announced that they have entered into an agreement by which Marvel will acquire Fleer for $28 per share in cash, or a total of approximately $265 million.

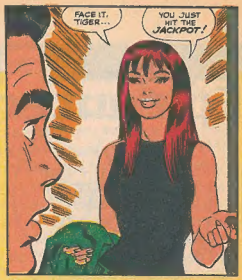
The transaction has been unanimously approved by the boards of directors of both companies. Under the agreement, a subsidiary of Marvel will begin a tender offer promptly for all of Fleer's shares. The offer is subject to, among other things, the tender of a majority of Fleer's outstanding shares.

Paul Mullan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Fleer, said, "In addition to our commitment to sports cards and confectionary products, our affiliation with Marvel will strengthen Fleer by association with one of the world's great libraries of entertainment characters."

Fleer Corp., based in Mt. Laurel, NJ, with operations in North America and Europe, is a leading marketer of sports picture cards (baseball, football and basketball) and confectionary products (including Dubble Bubble gum products).

Merrill Lynch & Co. is acting as financial advisor to Marvel and will act as Dealer Manager in connection with the tender offer.

X-MEN CARTOON UPDATE: The 13-episode *X-Men* animated cartoon series from Marvel Productions and Saban Entertainment, set to debut this Fall on the FOX Broadcasting Network, is being re-scheduled, and is now slated to debut in October. A specific date for the airing of the first episode will be announced.



ITEM! Marvel's Masterworks for 1992 include four new collections of classic stories from the Fantastic Four, Dr. Strange, Iron Man and Spider-Man. These four deluxe, hardbound anthologies re-presenting the Silver Age of some of Marvel's most popular characters will be released one each month over the next four months.

Reprinting TALES OF SUSPENSE #39-50, MARVEL MASTERWORKS #20 offers up the first twelve Iron Man stories. With the writing talents of Stan Lee, Larry Leiber, and Robert Burnstein and the art of Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and Don Heck, this volume includes several issues never before reprinted. It begins with the origin of Iron Man and features the first appearances of the Mandarin, the Melter and the Crimson Dynamo. Also included is the transformation of Iron Man's armor from dull gray to shining gold, then the red-and-gold style so familiar today!

(**NOTE: Issue #119 of MARVEL AGE** will be a special Iron Man anniversary issue, and will include a behind-the-scenes look by Terry Austin, revealing a special restoration process that was used for the MARVEL MASTERWORKS.)

MARVEL MASTERWORKS #21 collects FANTASTIC FOUR #31-40 and ANNUAL #2. These stories include the origin of Dr. Doom, teamups with Daredevil and the Sub-Mariner, the build-up to Sue and Reed's wedding and Marvel's very first photo cover. This collection of Stan Lee/Jack Kirby stories shows the FANTASTIC FOUR transformation from typical, early-sixties comic book tales to the heavy cosmic storylines that became the hallmark of it's 30 year run.

In November, the Masterworks celebrate Spidey's 30th anniversary with MARVEL MASTERWORKS #22, reprinting AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #41-50 and ANNUAL #3. In addition to the *first* Kingpin tale and stories featuring the Shocker, Kraven and the Vulture, this Stan Lee and John Romita anthology includes such classic moments as Peter and Mary Jane's very first date, Peter moving into his own bachelor pad with roommate Harry Osborn and a young Spidey's first attempt to join the Avengers.

Marvel wraps up the 1992 MARVEL MASTERWORKS with volume #23, a surreal collection of the first thirty-one Dr. Strange stories. Re-presenting STRANGE TALES #110, 111 and 114-141, this 272-page edition is one of the largest Masterworks ever printed. These classic Stan Lee/Steve Ditko stories include Doc's origin and the first appearances of the Ancient One, Nightmare, Baron Mordo and Dormammu.

ITEM! The Russians are coming. In a brand new 64-page special, SOVIET SUPER SOLDIERS is a behind-the-Iron Curtain peek at the state of super-powered heroes in pre-peristroyka Soviet Union. Written by Fabian Nicieza (X-MEN, X-FORCE, NEW WARRIORS, NOMAD), penciled by Angel Medina (WARLOCK AND THE INFINITY WATCH) and Javier Saltares (GHOST RIDER), and inked by Jeff Albrecht, the one-shot special offers an action/adventure story with an intricate plot. The book details the bloody in-fighting and political power plays surrounding Russian super hero groups over the years. The story centers around three different groups of heroes.

The Supreme Soviets (later named the People's Protectorate) are the Soviet Union's Avengers. A government funded and controlled group, they are Russia's "good guys." The second group of heroes are refered to as the Exiles. Last seen in X-FACTOR ANNUAL #1, they are a group of mutants considered to be "dangerous" by the government and therefore persecuted as criminals. The last group is called Remont 4 (translated from Russian, remont means "a restructure" or "return to"). Remont 4 is a group of fanatical and somewhat psychotic characters that includes: the Crimson Dynamo, Firefox, the new Unicorn and the *original* Titanium Man. They are a sanctioned by the G.R.U, the government group who enforces Communist party dictates using Stalin-era methods of militaristic force.

Taking place somewhere after the introduction of the Supreme Soviets in CAPTAIN AMERICA #350 and before the events chronicled in AVENGERS #319, SOVIET SUPER SOLDIERS ties up all the loose ends and unanswered questions of the past.

Matt Morra

Epicenter

LOS ANGELES, Friday, June 19: Late night television host Dennis Miller officially joined the WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEKWORLD cast when series creator William Shatner appeared on the *Dennis Miller Show* and presented him with a custom-made, full-color page of comic book artwork. The page, drawn by series artist Lee Sullivan, features TEKWORLD's Jake Cardigan protecting the former *Saturday Night Live* star from well-armed, high-tech assassins.

DENNIS-- HOW'D YOU MANAGE TO GET EVERY POLITICIAN IN NEW-WASHINGTON MAD AT YOU?
MAKE ONE JOKE TOO MANY ABOUT THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENS!
WAIT-- THEY'VE FLUSHED US OUT-- HEAD BACK THE OTHER WAY!
THIS CAN'T BE DOING ANYTHING FOR MY HAIR.
DON'T WORRY--IT'S MY JOB TO KEEP YOU ALIVE!
JAKE--BABE--YOU SOUND LIKE MY LAST AGENT.
THEY'RE FINISHED.
KAPOOM
...AND I AM OUTTA HERE!

TM & © 1992 William Shatner. All rights reserved.

Shatner and Miller adopted the roles of the lead characters to read the page, panel-by-panel, for the audience of the nationally-syndicated talk show. Miller kept the special color version of the page, then joined Shatner and Sullivan in signing the original black-and-white art, which was presented to Marvel President Terry Stewart and now rests in the Marvel archives.

"They hide in any closet and wait for you to sleep so they can feed off your misery. . .I tried not to sleep. . .why give them pleasure?

SINKING is a riveting study of one man's plunge into the dark depths of paranoid schizophrenia. Writer Jim (ESPERS, INTERFACE) Hudnall's true-to-life study is based on the personal experiences of a friend. The fully-painted artwork by Rob Ortaleza is a dazzling depiction of the young man's nightmare world; one inhabited by strange apparitions and demons. Powerful stuff. 80 pages, graphic novel format.

TM & © 1992 James Hudnall & Rob Ortaleza. All rights reserved.

"BOKASSA HAD FORBIDDEN ANYONE FROM ENTERING. HE HAD HEARD ANOTHER RUMOR OF AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. THESE RUMORS WERE QUITE FREQUENT IN THOSE DAYS."
(IF YOU DON'T LET ME IN, HE WON'T GET HIS SHOT. AND IF HE DOESN'T GET HIS INJECTION, YOU WILL BE TO BLAME..)

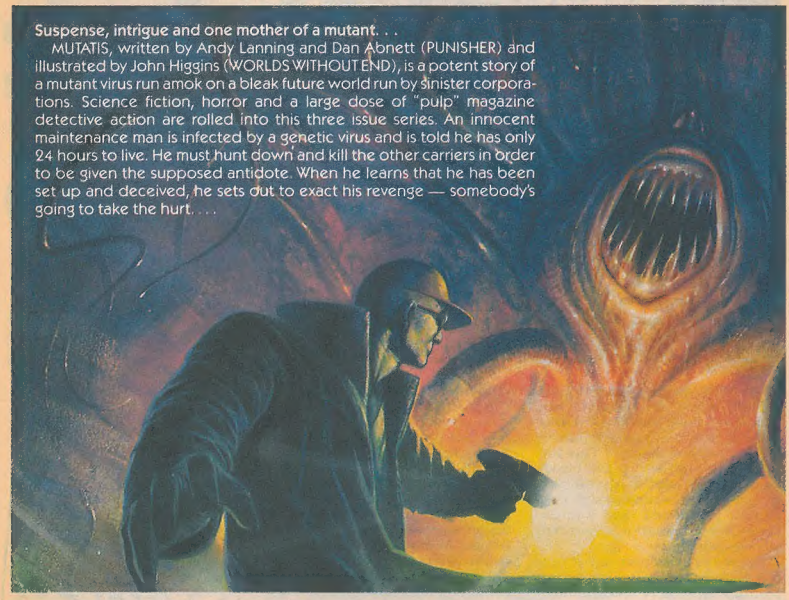
TM & © 1992 Raphael Nieves & Cindy Goff. All rights reserved.

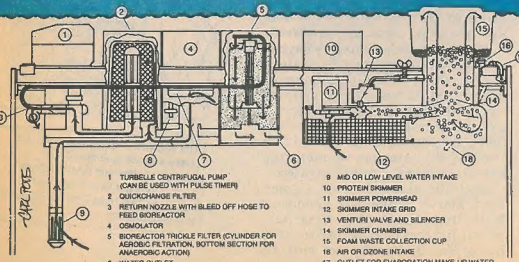
"... unless you're actually willing to do something to *stop* it, then wallowing in guilt about it isn't doing *anybody* any good!"

Harsh words from a hard-edged story called BLOODLINES: A TALE FROM THE HEART OF AFRICA. This is a factual story based on the violent atrocities committed by Jean Bedel Bokassa, emperor of the Central African Republic, against his countrymen. Written by Cindy Carr and Raphael Nieves, this forceful tale closely scrutinizes cultural and ethnic differences — and how we let those differences control our lives. The book's protagonist puts it in solemn perspective: "I trust no one but my family. My tribe. And that is the final curse. That we are bound and separated by lines. . .lines on a map. . .lines of blood. Who draws these lines. . .and who will cross them?" Art by Seitu Hayden. 48 pages, bookshelf format.

Suspense, intrigue and one mother of a mutant. . .

MUTATIS, written by Andy Lanning and Dan Abnett (PUNISHER) and illustrated by John Higgins (WORLDS WITHOUT END), is a potent story of a mutant virus run amok on a bleak future world run by sinister corporations. Science fiction, horror and a large dose of "pulp" magazine detective action are rolled into this three issue series. An innocent maintenance man is infected by a genetic virus and is told he has only 24 hours to live. He must hunt down and kill the other carriers in order to be given the supposed antidote. When he learns that he has been set up and deceived, he sets out to exact his revenge — somebody's going to take the hurt. . . .




1 TURBELLE CENTRIFUGAL PUMP (CAN BE USED WITH PULSE TIMER)
2 QUICKCHANGE FILTER
3 RETURN NOZZLE WITH BLEED OFF HOSE TO FEED BIOREACTOR
4 OSMOLATOR
5 BIOREACTOR TRICKLE FILTER (CYLINDER FOR AEROBIC FILTRATION, BOTTOM SECTION FOR ANAEROBIC ACTION)
6 WATER OUTLET
7 SURFACE WATER INTAKE THROUGH OSMOLATOR
8 OSMOLATOR EVAPORATION SENSOR
9 MID OR LOW LEVEL WATER INTAKE
10 PROTEIN SKIMMER
11 SKIMMER POWERHEAD
12 SKIMMER INTAKE GRID
13 VENTURE VALVE AND SILENCER
14 SKIMMER CHAMBER
15 FOAM WASTE COLLECTION CUP
16 AIR OR OZONE INTAKE
17 OUTLET FOR EVAPORATION MAKE UP WATER
18 HOSE TO DOSING PUMP IN RESERVOIR (OUTSIDE TANK)
AZLPETS

ALERT! Check out the August and September cover dated issues of *Fresh Water and Marine Aquarium* magazine for a scintillating two-part article by Marvel Executive Editor/Epic Carl Potts. "A Tour of the Tunze System," dramatically covers the history and merits of a high-tech German aquarium filtration system.

Net Yomtov

MAKING MASTERPIECES

PART ONE

This Fall, Skybox International (formerly Impel Marketing) will join with Marvel Entertainment to release a special premium trading card series — *Marvel Masterpieces.*™ This 100 card, high-end set of full-bleed, beautifully painted cards will feature 99 of the best known and most popular heroes and villains in the Marvel Universe, and a comprehensive checklist.

The set will also include five special cards featuring hero-vs.-villain pairings. Instead of creating more holograms, Skybox is developing a surprise process for these five unique cards, and Skybox representatives would not reveal the nature of the new process.

Ken Baroff, Skybox Marketing Manager for Entertainment, explained, "This set is meant to be a *special treat* for both the die-hard comic fans and the new comics readers. The cards offer a new dimension to the characters, a new way of looking at them, that we hope *everyone* will enjoy."

To make the *Marvel Masterpieces* cards even more spectacular, the painting chores will be handled by fan favorite Joe Jusko, whose best-known works are the painted covers and posters depicting many of Marvel's top characters, including his door-size poster of Mary Jane Watson-Parker (from the 1991 *MARVEL SWIMSUIT SPECIAL.*)

The *Marvel Masterpieces* card set has been in the works for more than a year. According to Marvel Licensing Senior Account Executive Irene Ackerman, the creation of the set began in late 1990 with a series of market studies organized by the Skybox marketing department. Selected age groups were shown a variety of different sorts of card concepts and art styles to learn which styles of non-sports trading cards they preferred.

The data was evaluated by Skybox and Marvel, and it was determined that the non-sports card hobby market was indeed ready for a high-quality, premium set. Since the *Marvel Universe* cards are the top selling non-sports cards, it was decided that the Marvel characters would be the logical stars for the premium project.

Once the idea was given a green light, Marvel Senior Vice-President/Marketing Alan Gordon, Irene Ackerman and Special Projects Executive Editor Bob Budiansky met with the

The initial concept sketch artist Joe Jusko submits to Editor Bob Budiansky, this one for the *Namor* card. Once the sketch has been approved, Joe uses it as the basis for the final painting.

(Left to right) Concept sketches for the *She-Hulk* and *Mr. Fantastic* card and the finished *Psylocke* card and the back design for the *Spider-Man* card. This card was sent by Skybox to Bob Budiansky for final changes and approval, and so is marked "prototype."

Skybox staff in North Carolina in October 1991, to determine what feeling the design of the cards should impart, and what type of artwork should be created. During these meetings, ideas such as die-cutting and an embossed set were bandied about, but it wasn't until Bob showed Joe Jusko's paintings to Alan, Irene and the folks from Skybox that the *Marvel Masterpieces* began to come to life.

Bob Budiansky noted, "Our reason for choosing Joe first is that, during his stay at Marvel, he has proven himself by consistently turning in great work and showing the ability to interpret all the Marvel characters in the painted format, from beautiful women to super heroes to monstrous beings to aliens."

After the meeting, Joe Jusko was contacted to find out if he was available for the project. He not only agreed enthusiastically, but he could not wait to get started. As Joe himself put it, "I was really up on the idea. I mean, I haven't really been up on a project in a while. It got to the point where I was calling Bob every week just to find out what was going on." Given a green light, Joe, with all the character names in hand, immediately began the sketching stage of his huge job.

Bob and Joe met to review the sketches as they were completed. They pored through all of them and made changes as they were needed.

The Joe Jusko *Marvel Masterpieces* artwork is scanned and placed in a computer file by Marvel Executive Editor Bob Budiansky. The same computer is used for the layout and design of the cards. Both artwork and layout are provided to Skybox on computer disk.

Photograph by Christopher Ebel

(Right) Artist Joe Jusko and Editor Bob Budiansky review the *Marvel Masterpieces* paintings Joe has brought in to the Marvel offices.

(Below) The *Human Torch* painting for the upcoming card set.

Photograph by Christopher Ebel

With the sketches approved, Joe was able to move on to the painting stage. Keeping the size of the project in mind, Joe decided to use acrylics, gouache, color pencils, markers or, as he explained, "any medium that is quick to dry and able to give me the effect I was looking for." As the paintings were completed, regular meetings with Bob continued to see if any corrections would be required.

While Joe continued to work, the next step was to decide on the overall design for the cards. To accomplish this, Bob Budiansky, Managing Editor David Wohl and Arnie Sawyer, of Sawyer Design Studios, met and drew up several initial sketches, which they showed to Alan Gordon and Skybox. This process continued until a final design for the cards was agreed upon by all parties.

Arnie then took the approved design, cleaned it up and transferred it onto a computer disc file. The file was sent to Skybox, along with the first group of Jusko paintings (prepared at more than 200 percent of final card size) and a number of black and white mechanicals used for art placement. The stage was set for preparations to begin for the printing stage.

NEXT ISSUE: Part two of the behind-the-scenes look at the making of the *Marvel Masterpieces* trading cards, in a one-time bagged issue containing a special preview version of the incredible Hulk card, available *only* in MARVEL AGE.

Joseph Caputo

WHO WAS THE *FIRST* TIME TRAVELING VILLAIN FROM THE FUTURE TO INVADE THE MARVEL UNIVERSE? IF YOU SAID *KANG THE CONQUEROR* FROM THE 30th CENTURY (ALSO KNOWN FROM TIME TO TIME – GET IT? *"FROM TIME TO TIME"?* Heh – AS *PHARAOH RAMA-TUT, IMMORTUS,* AND *THE SCARLET CENTURIAN*), YOU'D BE *WRONG*. NOPE, IT WAS THE EVIL GENIUS OF THE 23rd CENTURY, **ZARRKO** – DUBBED *"THE TOMORROW MAN"* IN *OUR* ERA – WHO CAN RIGHTFULLY MAKE *THAT* CLAIM. BATTLING THOR IN *JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY* #86 (Nov. 1962) A FULL 11 MONTHS BEFORE *KANG FIRST* APPEARED (AS RAMA-TUT) IN *FANTASTIC FOUR* #19, **ZARRKO** SECURED MARVEL IMMORTALITY WITH THAT PRECEDENCE SHATTERING APPEARANCE. *WHY* THEN ARE *MOST* OF YOU *FAMILIAR* WITH **KANG'S** MANY PERFIDIOUS PLOTS, BUT *FEW* OF YOU RECALL *ANY* OF **ZARRKO'S** FOUL FORAYS INTO VILLAINY? BELIEVE ME, THERE ARE *PLENTY* OF REASONS, AND HERE ARE JUST A *FEW*. FACT IS, *THESE* ARE THE

hembeck's page

TOP TEN REASONS KANG THE CONQUEROR IS MORE WIDELY RESPECTED THAN ZARRKO THE TOMORROW MAN

10 **KANG** is often **ASSOCIATED** with **DR. DOOM**; **ZARRKO** is often **MISTAKEN** for **DR. ZARKOV**

9 In **FIRST ENCOUNTER** with Thunder God, **KANG** repelled Thor's Magic Uru Hammer with **ANTI MATTER SCREEN**; during **FIRST ENCOUNTER** with Thor, **ZARRKO** tried luring Thunder God into **HALL OF MAGNETIC MIRRORS**

8 **PIN STRIPED PURPLE TIGHTS** much **HIPPER FASHION STATEMENT** than **BAGGY GREEN OVERALLS**

7 **KANG NEVER** asked when **"TOMORROW SHOW"** is coming back on the air and only **OCCASIONALLY** mistaken for **TOM SNYDER**

6 **KANG'S** quest to find **THE CELESTIAL MADONNA** more exciting than **ZARRKO'S** futile attempts to locate laser disc of **"SHANGHAI SURPRISE"**

5 **FULL FACE MASK** prevents **BIRDS** from **NESTING** in **BUSHY EYEBROWS**

4 **KANG** has alternate identities of **PHARAOH RAMA-TUT, IMMORTUS** and **SCARLET CENTURIAN**; **ZARRKO** once played lead in traveling company of **"THE KING AND I"**

3 Many **DIVERGENT TIMESTREAM COUNTERPARTS** of **KANG** more impressive than **ZARRKO** standing in **HALL OF MAGNETIC MIRRORS** in **BOXER SHORTS**

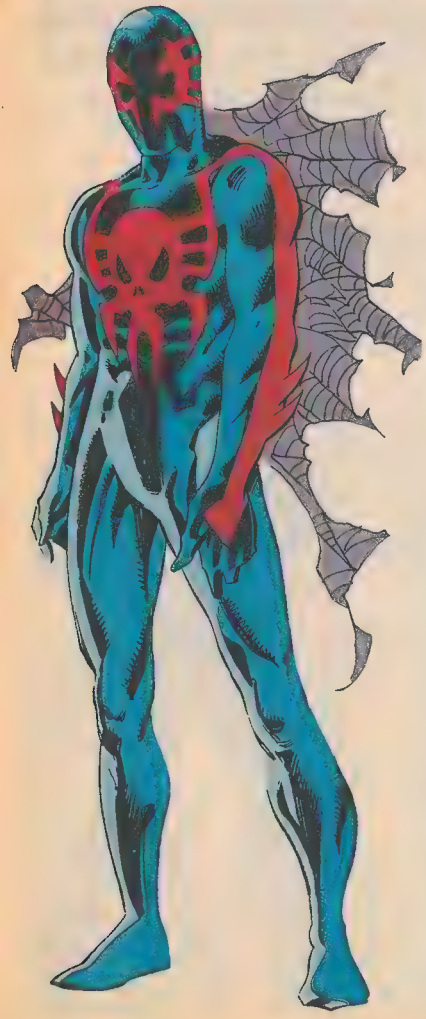
2 **KANGS' NAME** doubles as **SOUND EFFECT** for **STEEL VIOLENTLY** striking **STEEL**; **ZARRKO'S NAME** doubles as **SOUND EFFECT** for **BAD LUNCH VIOLENTLY RETURNING ONTO** diner

1 **DOESN'T** feel need to leave **"Z" MARK** across **CHEST** of **FOES** bested with **SWORD**

... AND THE NUMBER ONE REASON *KANG THE CONQUEROR* IS MORE WIDELY RESPECTED THAN ZARRKO THE TOMORROW MAN ~~

2099

A MARVEL ODYSSEY



Less than a decade remains before the beginning of the 21st Century, and while many people are already planning festivities to mark the transition into a new era, deep down, most are wondering, perhaps even fearing, what the new century will bring. What new scientific advances lie in this future? What will the map of the world look like a century hence? What resemblance will the average person's life bear to that of today?

Beginning in September, the Marvel Universe of the 21st Century and its heroes will be unveiled in a new line of four monthly series under the blanket title of MARVEL 2099, overseen by new Marvel Editor Joey Cavalieri.

The first of the series is SPIDER-MAN 2099, written by Peter David, penciled by Rick Leonardi, and inked by Al Williamson. October will mark the premiere issue of RAVAGE 2099, plotted and scripted by Marvel founding father Stan Lee, penciled by Paul Ryan, and inked by Keith Williams. Next, in November, comes DOOM 2099, written by John Francis Moore with pencils and inks by Pat Broderick (future issues will be inked by John Beatty). And the year closes with PUNISHER 2099 in December, written by British writers Pat Mills and Tony Skinner, drawn by Tom Morgan, and inked by James Palmiotti.

FUTURE ORIGINS

The idea for MARVEL 2099 originated with the principal creator of the present day Marvel Universe, Stan Lee. A few years ago, Stan began working with John Byrne on a graphic novel set in the future of the Marvel Universe, featuring a lawman named Ravage. Although this particular project eventually fell through, Stan was still enthusiastic about the idea of portraying the Marvel Universe of the future. A panel of top-level Marvel editors, including Tom DeFalco, Mark Gruenwald, Bob Harras, Ralph Macchio and Fabian Nicieza, put their heads together to begin developing a new series of titles all set in a specific future era. In addition to Ravage, they chose Spider-Man and the Punisher to star in the new books.

It was an idea sure to find audience approval. As Joey Cavalieri pointed out, "Every time they did a story about the future Marvel Universe, whether it was 'Days of Future Past' in THE X-MEN or the Thor of the future or GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY, the fans liked it immensely and wanted to see those characters again."

Marvel Editor in Chief Tom DeFalco hand-picked Joey, formerly an editor for DC Comics, specifically to edit the MARVEL 2099 line. "It was extremely enticing when Tom mentioned it to me," Joey recalled. "I couldn't leave it alone. I just kept thinking about it. It just seemed like a chance to make a mark on the Marvel Universe in a really fun and creative way." He even started a running notebook in which he kept jotting down ideas for the new titles.

In a sense, Joey says, it became "a chance to create the Marvel Universe all over again. At the very beginning of the Marvel Universe of 2099, there are no super heroes. We start to see them, one by one, just as you did in the early '60's. Who would not be excited by that prospect?" Aiding Joey in supervising the new line is Assistant Editor Sarra Mossoff, whom he calls one of the "unsung heroes" of the books.

Creating a new cast to match the classic Marvel heroes of the 1960's, however, was not an easy task. The lineup that began with Stan's new character, Ravage, expanded as it was decided that the other three series would star new versions of popular modern-day characters. Spider-Man and the Punisher, Joey says, were "naturals."

For the fourth slot Marvel editorial chose, not a fan-favorite hero, but Marvel's leading villain. During a discussion at an editorial meeting to determine what the fourth series should be, Editor Ralph Macchio came up with DOOM 2099. "How can you resist that?" Joey asked. "It's very difficult to structure a book around somebody who's traditionally thought of as a villain, but I think you'll be able to see him in a different light."

The MARVEL 2099 series do not yet feature new versions of classic super hero teams, and this is definitely intentional. Super heroes are only just beginning to appear on the Marvel Earth of 2099, and, as Joey pointed out, "What the characters have in common, including Ravage and Doom, is that they're alone. These characters have to fend for themselves and think for themselves."

There were pitfalls Joey was determined to avoid. Even though the world of 2099 is clearly based on the present Marvel Universe, Joey did not want to reveal the future fates of major present-day Marvel characters. For this reason, the Spider-Man and Punisher of 2099 are not descendants of the originals, whose ultimate fates will remain mysteries. As for Doom, that is another story.

"I was trying to tell them *anything* goes."

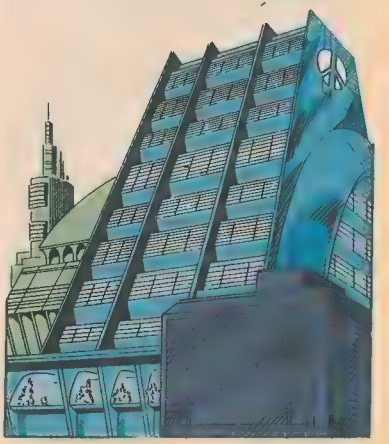
The next step in the development process was the selection of the creative teams for the four series. Stan, of course, would write RAVAGE, and Joey invited various writers to submit proposals for the other three books. He said he had no preconceptions about the milieu of this future universe. "What I was hoping for was works of really unbridled imagination. I was trying to tell them *anything* goes. A lot of people asked me, 'Is this what you want?' and my answer was 'What do *you* want to see? What do you want to write about?'" He ultimately selected the proposals by "those people whose work just knocked me out. They came up with incredible new takes to these characters, a new dimension to a character that is at once familiar, but they manage to show you a side of it that I think you haven't seen before."

HIGH DENSITY PLASTO ARMOR, TYPE UNKNOWN
'54 CALIBRE MAGNUM SMITH AND WESSON 2015 ANTIQUE
'48 CALIBRE STARK FUJIKAWA STREET PACIFIER
THREE GRENAZERS WITH SMART TARGETING STANDARD
"MEAN MULE TURBO KICK BOOTS
POWER BAT TYPE UNKNOWN."
WHO ARE YOU? YOU'RE NO STROLLING CITIZEN PACKING THAT HARDWARE...

CREATING A WORLD

The people behind MARVEL 2099 insisted on constructing a believable future Earth based to a great degree on the political and social trends and scientific developments of the real world in which we live. Joey, Sarra and the writers created a "bible" for MARVEL 2099 that established the major aspects of this future world: not only its politics and technology, but also its economy, architecture, fashions, religions, sports, weaponry, and entertainment media. To a considerable extent, this bible evolved from the writers' original proposals for the four series. Joey noted, "Sarra Mossoff, Mark Gruenwald, and I held a writers' symposium at a local hotel. We invited all the writers whose proposals we accepted to the hotel, to pitch ideas around and get a consensus on what this future was going to be like. It was all hammered out in great detail."

By 2099, the United States has become a very different country. The government is effectively run by the major corporations and, reflecting areas of corporate influence, it has fragmented, with the United States in the east, and the Federation of American States (including parts of Mexico) in the south. California has become an island, perhaps due to a natural disaster. The use of the Spanish and Japanese languages has become much more



prevalent. There are widespread border skirmishes, and each government has developed its own high-tech army of superhuman "corporate raiders."

One of the major corporations, Alchemax (for which the new Spider-Man works), basically owns New York and controls most of the East Coast. Money no longer exists in the form of cash; instead, people rely entirely on the use of "debit cards." Police forces do not work for the government, but are privately owned. Class divisions have grown far more pronounced.

Major advances have been made in genetic engineering, and are routinely applied to human beings. Automobiles run on superconductors, not gasoline, telephones have become super-miniaturized, computers and non-humanoid robots are everywhere, and everyone wears body armor for protection against omnipresent crime. The major entertainment medium is virtual reality, and comic books have become so expensive only the wealthy can afford them!

Readers will see what Europe and the rest of the 2099 international scene have become in DOOM 2099, and, Joey said, there are tentative plans for the 2099 books to explore the rest of Earth's solar system within their first year.

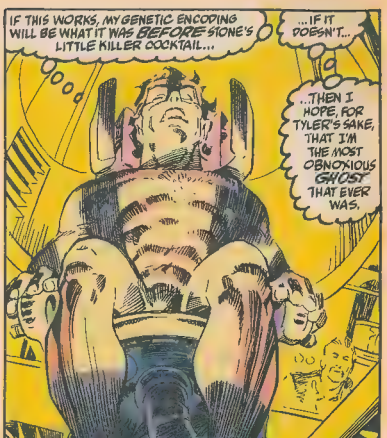
RAVAGE 2099

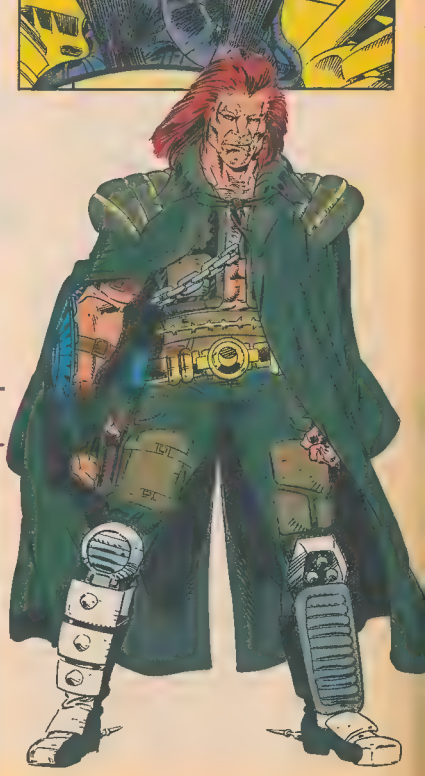
When he first appears, Ravage is a very different kind of person than the unstoppable one-man fighting machine he later becomes.

Paul Phillip Ravage is the commanding officer of ECO, the "ecological police" force run by Alchemax. He is a friendly, peaceful man who hates violence and supports the rule of law, but when he learns the extent of the corruption at ECO and tries to expose it to the world, the true powers behind ECO launch an attempt on his life.

As a result, Ravage's personality changes radically. He becomes a fierce, implacable vigilante, frightening even to those he helps, dedicated to destroying the corrupt institutions of his time. Though he lives in a world of high technology, Joey says, "A lot of what he uses in his crusade is second-hand stuff that he's rebuilt himself. He feels he's been thrown away by the system and he works with stuff that's been thrown away."

The corporations are not his only adversaries. There are also the Mutroids, criminals from Hellrock, a prison island and dumping ground for radioactive and toxic waste that mutated them into superhuman beings. They are led by Dethstryk, who is destined to become Ravage's deadliest foe.


IF THIS WORKS, MY GENETIC ENCODING WILL BE WHAT IT WAS BEFORE STONE'S LITTLE KILLER COCKTAIL...
...IF IT DOESN'T...
...THEN I HOPE, FOR TYLER'S SAKE, THAT I'M THE MOST OBNOXIOUS GHOST THAT EVER WAS.



What do you tell the guy who practically created the Marvel Universe?

At first, Joey Cavalieri felt somewhat intimidated by the prospect of editing Stan Lee. "What do you tell the guy who practically created the Marvel Universe? As a matter of fact, it's a lot of fun working with Stan. It's been a real lesson. Sarra and I had lunch with Stan not so long ago, during which he darn near plotted the whole first issue of RAVAGE right in front of us. He'd been thinking a lot about it, obviously." Stan, said Joey, has considerably changed his approach to Ravage since originally working on the concept with John Byrne. "He took the merest kernel of the idea in the piece he was working on with John Byrne and transformed it into something else completely. I think it's because he's been reading a lot of comics lately from the top talents in the business, and saying, 'how can we meet this challenge.' He's very interested in what's going on now. I think RAVAGE reflects a real change in his thinking.

"A lot of people said, 'Well, how are you going to edit him?' He does not bring his ego to the table; he brings only his ideas. He'll tell you five, six, or seven ideas. And if

there's one you don't care for, he'll say, 'Okay, we don't have to do that; we can do this.' If you strike down one idea, there are four more right behind it. He makes it look very easy."

Joey has only praise for artist Paul Ryan's work on RAVAGE. "The storytelling could not be better. It's been a dream working with Paul. He's been extraordinarily enthusiastic about depicting the future. No matter what you ask him, he can do it."

SPIDER-MAN 2099

Another possible pitfall in creating the Marvel Universe of 2099 was making the future versions of present day Marvel characters too much like the originals. So HULK and X-FACTOR writer Peter David took a very different approach in conceptualizing the Spider-Man of 2099. "In his proposal to me," Joey recalled, "he said this character should zig where the other one zags. So he took everything about the Peter Parker Spider-Man and tried to turn it 180 degrees."

The new Spider-Man is Miguel O'Hara, a young man of mixed Mexican and Irish descent who has become a brilliant genetic engineer for Alchemax while still in his teens. "At the very beginning," Joey said, "he's someone who reaps the rewards of being part of Alchemax. But as a result of his transformation and his dealings with the company, he now has grave doubts about the system he's working for."

Miguel gains spider-like super-powers, but they are not entirely the same as the original Spider-Man's, and they manifest in far more horrific ways. "We discover Spider-Man's powers one at a time, as he does. They evolve somewhat over the first couple of months, so be prepared for a couple of surprises." Joey believes that the biggest surprises lie in how Miguel's transformation will affect his physical appearance. "He does look human, but I think the way his genetic structure has been changed makes it a lot more convenient for him to be Spider-Man than it is for Peter Parker." Indeed, his physical alterations help account for the fact that "A lot more people are afraid of this Spider-Man than they would be of the original Spider-Man. Even his closest friends are afraid of him." Readers may find that, as Miguel evolves, he will remind them as much of Venom as of today's Spider-Man.

Despite all the differences, there are still strong similarities betwen the Spider-Man of 1992 and his 2099 successor. For one thing, there is the character's sense of humor. The new Spider-Man "is very flip, very sharp in the way that the original Spider-Man was," Joey reported, although he acknowledged that "He's a little bit more cynical than his present day counterpart, and he's got every right to be."

> "I said, 'Rick, do you have a garage where you've built one of these?'"

As for the artwork by Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson, Joey says, "This is the stuff that's generated the most 'oohs' and 'ahs' from everybody who's seen it. You can't ask for better than Rick and Al. Rick's also someone else who's very serious about depicting this future. He's very enthusiastic." In fact, Joey noted, after Rick showed him a series of highly detailed designs for the flying vehicles of 2099, "I said, 'Rick, do you have a garage where you've built one of these?'"

PUNISHER 2099

Sometimes a man's name can be his destiny. So it is that policeman Jake Gallows becomes the Punisher of 2099. "Like the first Punisher, he has a very strong sense of justice," Joey said. But that sense is violated by what he sees going on around him. As in the case of the original Punisher, his loved ones are murdered, but this killer gets away with it because he can afford to. "He's very rich," Joey explained, "and he can buy his way out of anything. In fact, in this future, you only get police protection if you subscribe to it. It's been privatized and you have to pay. There is a caste of people who do not have credit, who do not have any money. They're poor and therefore, if something happens to them, nobody cares. Jake Gallows feels that this is an outrage, that justice should be for more people than just those who can afford it," even if he has to take the law into his own hands to do it. He will be hunted by the police, who feel he is a renegade, a loose cannon mixing in their business. Jake will retain his police job, and in doing so will maintain a constant source of information and resources. He will be assisted by a police tech who will act as his version of "Microchip."

PUNISHER 2099 is written by Pat Mills, best known to Marvel readers for MARSHAL LAW, and his partner Tony Skinner. They use the series to show a great deal of the advanced technology of 2099. "I told Pat I like the book best when it deals with the technology of the future and crimes that could not possibly happen today," Joey said. "There ain't gonna be no bank robbers!" For example, in the first issue there is a microwave gun: "it burns you from the inside out." But although the new Punisher lives in a high-tech world, he prefers to rely on an ancient, though still highly effective, weapon: his Magnum.

Commenting on Tom Morgan's artwork, Joey said, "It's just intense." Morgan, too, has done a great deal of work on designs for the many aspects of this future Earth. "His work is a complete step up from anything of his you've seen before. He pulled out all the stops."

DOOM 2099

This series opens when a young, armored man, claiming to be Doctor Doom, appears in Doom's former kingdom of Latveria decades after the sinister monarch had mysteriously disappeared. Can this really be the original Doctor Doom? If so, where has he been for so long, and how has he somehow reversed his own aging? If not, then why did he assume the guise of the nearly forgotten tyrant?

> He is determined to become a force capable of challenging the political and corporate powers that rule the globe. . . .

Finding Latveria in the hands of its new ruler, the cyborg Tiger Wilde (a former corporate raider), Doom joins forces with a strange gypsy tribe of computer hackers. With them as his allies, the "new" Doom sets out to master the technology of the future. He is determined to become a force capable of challenging the political and corporate powers that rule the globe, and to save it from its rapid descent into chaos. This Doom may be a villain, but there will be times when he demonstrates great heroism.

Writer John Francis Moore may be new to Marvel, but readers may know him from his work with Howard Chaykin as story editor and writer on the *Flash* television series. Joey Cavalieri was fascinated by the way Moore placed Doom within the recent science fiction subgenre of "cyber punk," which deals with giant corporations and advanced, biologically- interactive computer science. "I didn't think it was possible to give that kind of sensibility to a character like Doom. You look at Doom and you think of castles and that kind of medieval milieu." But there is still more to add to DOOM 2099's mix of technology and political intrigue. "This little tribe of cyberpunks that he hangs out with are very mystically-oriented as well. There's always been a strong magical side to Doom. I think we're going to try to bring that out a lot more."

Pat Broderick was recruited for DOOM in part based on his work for ALPHA FLIGHT. His art, which Joey praises as "tremendously detailed and lovingly rendered," has also been seen over the years in GREEN LANTERN, MICRONAUTS and (most recently) ALPHA FLIGHT, among others.

THE FUTURE OF THE FUTURE

There will, of course, be crossovers among the four MARVEL 2099 books, and, if the line proves successful, more 2099 books will spin off, some featuring brand new characters, others starring more new versions of classic Marvel characters. Joey was very happy with his writers' enthusiasm , and says he "couldn't be luckier" with the artists he has lined up for the 2099 books. He also made a point of praising the work of letterer Kenny Lopez in designing the logos for the four series. "These guys are so *psyched*, their level of enthusiasm is just so high, it's unlike anything I've ever seen before. These guys like each other's work. There's no creative jealousy going on. It's really very synergistic, and everybody is trying to build on what the other person is doing. I don't have to force the issue because they're all for it. They want for there to be a cross-pollination of ideas. They're enjoying their work, and I promise you it's going to show."

A BEACON OF HOPE

The world of MARVEL 2099 may be very different from our own, but in many ways it is oddly familiar, as well. "Like a lot of good science fiction," Joey Cavalieri pointed out, "it really turns out to be a comment on the way we, as individuals, live now in our society. Also, most science fiction is a reaction to the fears that we have about what the future will be like. And I think these comics address this really well."

"I think they offer a ray of hope against insurmountable odds."

As grim as much of this future Earth may seem, it is not a world without good reasons for hope. "I certainly would not like to be told that the next hundred years are going to be the hardest," said Joey. "Why would I want to get up the next morning if I'm told I'm going to be living in a miserable place? What these series do is to take our problems, push them to the absolute max, and then present people who are thrust into the position of doing something about those problems. The mere fact that there are these characters who are doing something about it offsets the pessimism to a tremendous degree. They offer a ray of hope against insurmountable odds. I think that's the definition of a hero." And the four new series that comprise MARVEL 2099 give readers a new set of heroes to help them face what lies ahead in the fast approaching 21st century.

Peter Sanderson

stan's SOAP BOX

Hi, Heroes!

There I was, just minding my own business, when suddenly Sagacious Steve Saffel, the editorial mastermind behind MARVEL AGE, tossed an interesting question at me.

"After all these years, what does it feel like to return to a regularly issued title, RAVAGE 2099, to create it and work with an editor and an artist?"

Well, I could have simply responded, "Hey, it feels great!" and that would have been that. But it wouldn't have been the whole story. (Nor would it have given me enough material for this column!) Nope, Steve's query really made me think of how it was to create and write a comic book series years ago compared to how it is today.

Perhaps the first thing that comes to mind is the fact that Marvel was a much smaller company in the sixties, when we were grinding out those early issues of FANTASTIC FOUR, HULK, SPIDEY and the rest. In fact, in addtion to scripting those stories, I also served as an editor, which made my job awfully easy. You see, inasmuch as I was my own biggest fan, I loved all the scripts I wrote, so I never bothered spending too much time editing them. I was in somewhat the same position as you'd be if you were a student in class, but you were also the teacher! Just imagine the good grades you'd give yourself!

Back then I also served as art director, which was really the most exciting and satisfying part of the job to me! I got to discuss covers, layouts, action and all the other elements that go to make up the visual part of an exciting comic strip with such major talents as Romita, Kirby, Ditko, Colan, Buscema, Everett, Steranko, Ayers, Heck, Kane, Andru, Wood, Severin, and dozens of others. You see, writing a script is a pretty lonely job. You sit by yourself with only your thoughts for company. But working with the artists, discussing the poses and the compostions and the action shots and the covers — especially the covers — that, to me, was the most exciting part of the job!

And now, after all these years, I must be one of the luckiest guys in comics, because I'm getting a chance to do it all over again. Originally, our MARVEL 2099 series was going to be one big comic book which would later spin off into a number of individual series. But, after some bombastic brain-storming with Titanic Tom DeFalco, our ebullient editor-in-chief, and his cadre of co-editors, we decided to go for broke and introduce the entire series as a set, one new title per month, because the MARVEL 2099 concept was just too exciting to hold back!

Each book will have its own artist-writer-editor team. My title is RAVAGE, the one character who has no connection with any present Marvel hero (Unless, of course, we decide to pull a zinger later on and claim that Ravage is really the grandson of Dr. Doom's second cousin on his mother's side!).

And I really lucked out when it came to picking an artist to work on RAVAGE. One of my all-time favorites of the newer breed of Marvel masters is Peerless Paul Ryan. His artwork has always knocked me out, but after seeing his illos when he teamed up with the ever-dynamic DeFalco's scripts and took over the FANTASTIC FOUR art chores, I figured I'd hock one of my portable remote-control teflon-coated No-Prizes for a chance to work with the guy! So guess who's gonna illustrate RAVAGE — and don't tell me you want more hints! Right! It's none other than Riotous Ryan who's gonna breathe life and excitement into the man called RAVAGE!

But there's even more! Since Marvel is no longer the tiny company it was when all this wonderment started, there's now an entire editorial chain of command which supervises the content of each mag. And if you want proof of what a terrific job they do, just consider this: when Marvel started in the early sixties, we produced an average of twelve to fifteen titles a month. Today, we turn out *over one hundred titles* every thirty days! Even with a whole staff of editors and editorial assistants, I'll level with you — I still don't know how they do it!

My editor on RAVAGE is Jolly Joey Cavalieri, the greatest guy you could ever hope to work with. Joey's responsible for the entire MARVEL 2099 line, and take it from me, it's like having a whole, burgeoning world in your charge, a world that is constantly changing, growing and developing. Joey not only has a tight grip on the whole operation, but working with Tom DeFalco and the rest of Marvel's editorial mavens, he's already come up with a zillion comments and suggestions which constantly re-enforce my opinion that the MARVEL 2099 series will be the comic book blockbuster sensation of the decade!

And there you have it — DeFalco, Cavalieri, Ryan, and that new kid on the block, Lee, teamed up in a brand new, ground breaking project which has me just as revved up and rarin' to go as I was, lo! those many years ago, when Spidey, Hulky and Stretcho's fabulous foursome were just a'bornin'!

So, when Sly Stevey Saffel asks what it's like to return to a regularly-issued title, to create it and work with an artist and editor, all I can say is I have to be the luckiest guy west of Peoria to have a chance like this the second time around! There are few things more satisfying than having the opportunity to create something and be part of the process as it evolves and grows and finally attains a life of its own. And, with a co-parent like Paul Ryan, and a mid-wife like Joey Cavalieri, hey — I'm in puppy heaven!

But now, the time has come for us to say "adieu" until next ish. Yet, how much sweeter is a farewell when accompanied by those inspirational words, "littera scripta manet!"

Excelsior!

Spider-Man Daredevil and Venom United for unicef

A one-of-a-kind Spider-Man comic book, available this September, stands to benefit thousands of poor and hungry children. Produced and donated as a fund-raising effort for the United States Committee for UNICEF, it will star Spider-Man, Venom and Matt (Daredevil) Murdock in "The Trial of Venom."

"The Trial of Venom"...will fit neatly into the framework of the Marvel Universe.

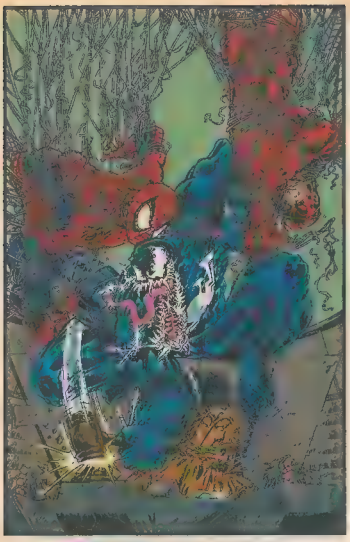
All Marvel comics bearing the November cover date will contain a public service announcement page that will offer the comic to Marvel readers in return for a donation of $5.00 or more to the U.S. Committee for UNICEF.

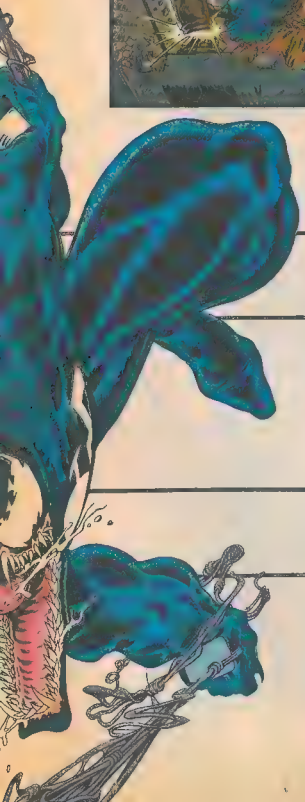
UNICEF is a global organization that provides assistance to 128 developing countries, ranging from health care to literacy training to emergency relief. The United Nations Children's Fund helps thousands of children survive in the world's poorest countries, with the emphasis on helping people to help themselves. Each nation has its own committee that works to raise money within its own boundaries. Thus, the U.S. Committee is structured to raise money only within the United States.

Marvel President Terry Stewart is on the Board of Directors of the U.S. Committee and initiated this project with Barry Kaplan, Marvel Executive Vice President of Custom Publishing, and Elisabeth Schalk, Director of the U.S. Committee's Department of Education. In her own words, Schalk was thankful and astounded by, "the incredible generosity of Terry Stewart in what he's done to put his company to work for the children of the world. This project will give hope and life to children in the developing world."

To make this happen, Barry Kaplan selected Editor Glenn Herdling to bring together the elements for an outstanding comic book. Glenn recruited the talents of Peter David, of THE INCREDIBLE HULK fame, veteran penciler Jim Craig, and Canadian inkers Dan and David Day, to create a new Spider-Man/Venom story.

"The Trial of Venom" will be 22 pages and will fit neatly into the framework of the Marvel Universe. The tale opens with Venom awaiting trial at the Vault in the Colorado Rockies. Matt Murdock arrives as his defense attorney and calls on Spider-Man as a witness. Venom has not forgiven either Spider-Man or Daredevil for destroying his life as reporter Eddie Brock.





Included in the book is a 13x20 inch pull out poster and a cover that will feature a special fifth color ink. The comic will bear a cover price of $1.25, but can only be obtained by making a contribution of at least $5.00 (or more) directly to the U.S. Committee for UNICEF. Any reader who wishes to obtain more than one copy must mail in a separate donation and individual coupon (or facsimile of one) for each comic book. The details and coupons will be printed in all November-dated Marvel titles (available in September).

Any reader who wishes to obtain more than one copy must mail in a separate donation and individual coupon for each comic book.

In order to assist comic book store owners in making this comic book even more readily available, Marvel will send promotional posters to all the stores, accompanied by a supply of coupons. The U.S. Committee for UNICEF will also supply the stores with UNICEF's familiar orange donation boxes. Contributions of loose change will be counted as money raised through the efforts of the readers and the comic retailers. Marvel will be responsible for all printing, fulfillment and handling costs involved in producing the special issue.

If the project is as successful as expected, the donations will fund a complete self-help project in an area of the world that desperately needs the support. The money could be used to provide purified and healthy water to a whole community, or

If the project is as successful as expected, the donations will fund a complete self-help project in an area of the world that desperately needs the support.

to gain essential medical assistance for those who currently lack it, or it could provide children with vitamins that will prevent them from going blind from poor nutrition. Other possibilities for improvement abound.

Barry Kaplan's sentiments echoed those of everyone involved in the project. "Marvel has long recognized the power of the comic book medium and its characters to help influence and educate the youth of America. It's rewarding for us to use this same vehicle to help raise funds to substantially improve the lives of youth in developing countries."

Marsha Foye

NIGHTSTALKERS

With the supernatural, the occult and the horrific gaining a stronger foothold in the Marvel Universe, the days of standard wooden stake and silver bullet solutions are past. More grit is needed, more muscle. Enter the Nightstalkers.

Written by Dan Chichester with pencils by MOON KNIGHT's Ron Garney and inks by Tom Palmer, NIGHTSTALKERS debuts in September as the latest "Midnight Sons" offering. Like its companion titles, the book deliberately taps into the mood and elements of the super-horror genre repopularized by GHOST RIDER. In terms of storyline, though, NIGHTSTALKERS is less a spin-off of GHOST RIDER than of TOMB of DRACULA.

With the Nightstalkers, if you mess with the occult, you're toast.

It was during Dracula's plasma-draining jaunt through the Marvel Universe (1972-1979) that readers were introduced to Hannibal King, Frank Drake and Blade, an unlikely trio whose entire existence began and ended with their quest to exterminate vampirism. When the deed was finally done — in DOCTOR STRANGE #62, (December 1983) — so, too, it seemed, was the vampire hunters' raison d'etre.

Chichester and NIGHTSTALKERS Editor Bobbie Chase didn't see this to be the case. Long before the "Midnight Son" brainstorming began, Chase began discussions with Chichester to create a book re-teaming the three characters.

"In a lot of ways [the Nightstalkers] were driven by one thing, essentially a need to destroy Dracula and vampirism," Chichester noted. "I said, 'Well if this is it, we're going to run through every story possibility in six issues to one extent or another, and then we'll just start repeating ourselves.' So I tried to fashion something deeper in each of them that I could latch onto. . .giving them a larger tapestry against which they base their lives."

A major element in the resulting overhaul was to make it clear this outfit shouldn't be tagged simply as "Vampire stalkers." As presented this time, the trio is on an even more daunting mission: to crush the mystic in any and all of its myriad forms.

"These guys are out to kill anything supernatural because they've just been screwed around with so many times that they're sick of it," Chase said. "And if that means taking out Doctor Strange or the Scarlet Witch or Ghost Rider or anybody, they're up for it. I thought that was a really unique angle."

Chichester's assessment is more succinct: "With the Nightstalkers, if you mess with the occult, you're toast."

Both point to the story's anti-supernatural slant as perhaps the greatest distinction between NIGHTSTALKERS and the other "Midnight Sons' titles — SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE, MORBIUS and DARKHOLD. It's a distinction

apparent from the book's premiere issue, a polybagged 48-page special in which our heroes enter into the "The Rise of the Midnight Sons" crossover.

As the series opens, we find the Nightstalkers established under the "minimal mask" of Borderline Investigative Services, a detective agency they've formed to facilitate their less overt efforts. The base is Boston, a location chosen for its history, diversity and more than a passing glance of the visually Gothic.

To do a book that it so anti-occult is a bit of a challenge.

Into this arena comes the sinister Lilith, the crossover's central antagonist, posing as a client who wants Ghost Rider and John Blaze killed. Unaware of their employer's true nature, King, Drake and Blade attack the assignment with purpose.

For Chichester, widely recognized among Marvel's resident masters of the macabre, such demon-bashing exploits set him on strangely different creative ground.

"It's a neat twist, because a lot of what I've done before has been almost reveling in the occult," Chichester said. "To do a book that is so anti-occult is a bit of a challenge."

Unlike the severe, over-the-top horrorscapes he crafted in the HELLRAISER and NIGHTBREED titles, Chichester said, his work on NIGHTSTALKERS is tempered by an element of hope.

"As gritty or as borderline as these characters may be in their approach, ultimately there's a heroic sense to what they're going to be doing," he said, "As we develop the characters they'll still keep this kind of manic edge to them, but I think there's a light at the end of the tunnel."

This duality of character is most sharply etched in Blade, a hero after the Punisher's own heartlessness. Set on a lifelong mission of vengeance when his mother was slain by the vampiric Deacon Frost, the scowling Blade treads a tightrope between determination and fanaticism.

"There's an uncompromising quality to what he's going to do because he's never known anything but this kind of life," said Chichester, who noted that the Punisher will in fact be making an appearance in an early storyline to help highlight this theme. When the two cross paths, he explained, the Nightstalkers will be forced to scrutinize their often murky heroic code.

"When they go off on whoever they're against, they are a pretty brutal bunch," Chichester says. "They can be as bad as what they're going up against. In some cases they're worse."

NIGHTSTALKERS' requisite dose of pathos will be supplied by Hannibal King, himself a vampire who, though cured by Doctor Strange, cannot fully regain his humanity.

They can be as bad as what they're going up against. In some cases they're worse.

"He's not really a vampire, but he's not human anymore either — he's trapped in a very peculiar middle ground," Chichester says. "King has had normalcy, and is yearning for something he's never going to be able to have again. It's a torture-driven thing, as opposed to the mania that drives Blade."

While retaining some semblance of his stolen past by applying his formidable investigative skills to Borderline, King on occasion can also be found wandering Boston's cemeteries, collecting gravestone rubbings as mournful reminders of the peace he'll be forever denied.

A voice of moderation countering Blade's reckless impulses, King at the same time wrestles with what Chichester calls "a cold turkey desire" for flesh and blood, having once been something of a "Hannibal the Cannibal" himself.

These vestiges of King's vampirism figure prominently into the book's first story arc, a three-part saga in which Hydra's Department of Occult Armaments (D.O.A.) attempts to make King its test subject for creating an army of vampire super soldiers. The Hydra arc will bring Morbius into the mix, setting the stage for further developments between Morbius and King.

Fans of Chichester's TERROR, INC. should look for an appearance by that character in an upcoming NIGHTSTALKERS, too. Doctor Strange will be woven into the storyline as the Nightstalkers realize the unseen role he played in drawing the trio together — and they seek to make the Master of the Mystic Arts answer for his intervention. And the book won't ignore its roots. Dracula will make his return at about the time NIGHTSTALKERS reaches the one-year mark.

It's a torture-driven thing, as opposed to the mania that drives Blade.

The confrontation is particularly important for Frank Drake, who, in addition to being the deep pocket financing Borderline, lives with the ignominy of being Dracula's descendant. Although Drake is the only Nightstalker with "a nominally normal existence," Chichester said, "he's taken it on his own shoulders to clean up the family name."

While sketching these early directions for NIGHTSTALKERS, Chichester and Chase stressed that readers won't need to be TOMB OF DRACULA aficionados to appreciate the new exploits. If anything, Chichester said, his long-term goal is to make the '70s Dracula cast more widely accessible, dusting off their lesser-seen corner of the Marvel Universe and giving it greater connection with other characters and titles.

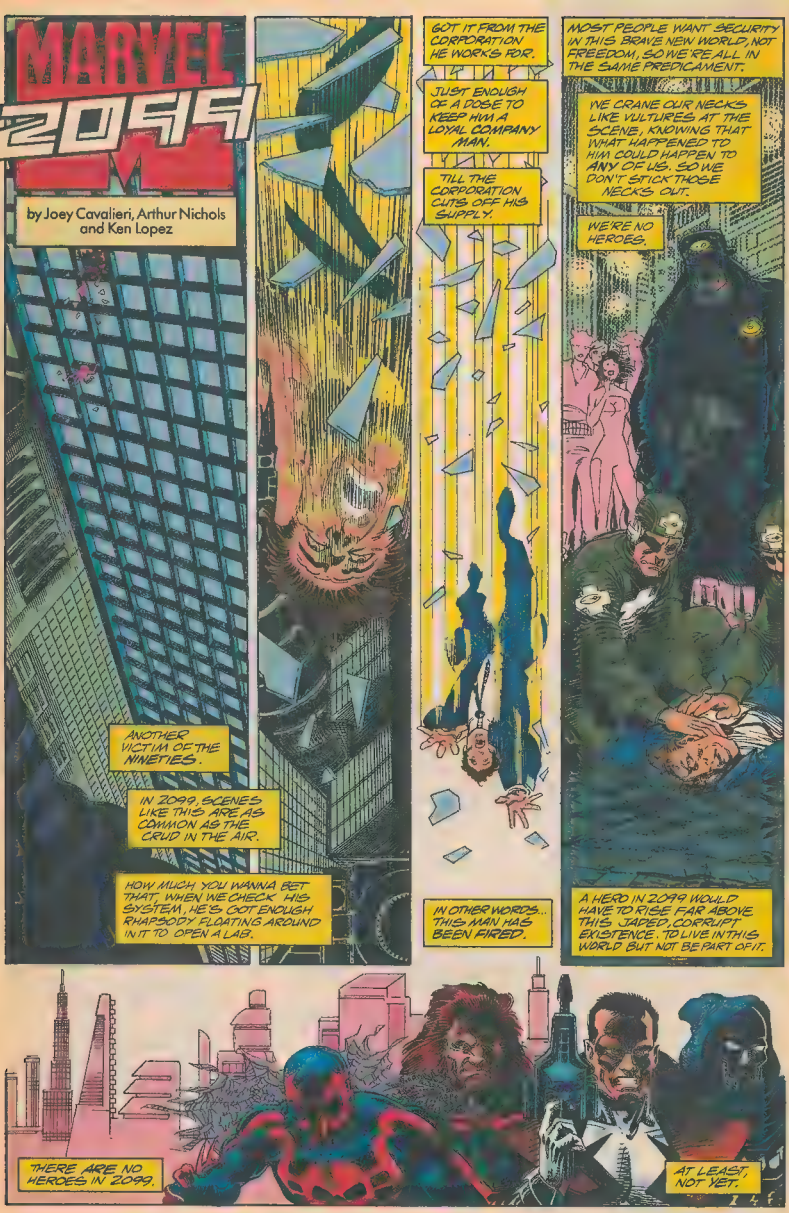
"I took the germ of the old TOMB OF DRACULA stuff and that's all I took," Chichester said.

The NIGHTSTALKERS creative team's other aim, of course, is to satisfy a growing craving for the horrific among readers.

"In all the forms of entertainment media — books, movies and comics — there's been a larger general acceptance of horror," Chichester summed up. "Whereas before, six buddies would get together and go to the midnight screening of BASKET CASE or something, now a Freddy movie is a big deal and everybody goes to see it. It's given a forum for this kind of thing in comics.

"I think it's been a long time coming."

Tom Russo


MARVEL 2099
by Joey Cavalieri, Arthur Nichols and Ken Lopez
ANOTHER VICTIM OF THE NINETIES.
IN 2099, SCENES LIKE THIS ARE AS COMMON AS THE CRUD IN THE AIR.
HOW MUCH YOU WANNA BET THAT, WHEN WE CHECK HIS SYSTEM, HE'S GOT ENOUGH RHAPSODY FLOATING AROUND IN IT TO OPEN A LAB.
GOT IT FROM THE CORPORATION HE WORKS FOR.
JUST ENOUGH OF A DOSE TO KEEP HIM A LOYAL COMPANY MAN.
TILL THE CORPORATION CUTS OFF HIS SUPPLY.
IN OTHER WORDS... THIS MAN HAS BEEN FIRED.
MOST PEOPLE WANT SECURITY IN THIS BRAVE NEW WORLD, NOT FREEDOM, SO WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME PREDICAMENT.
WE CRANE OUR NECKS LIKE VULTURES AT THE SCENE, KNOWING THAT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM COULD HAPPEN TO ANY OF US. SO WE DON'T STICK THOSE NECKS OUT.
WE'RE NO HEROES.
A HERO IN 2099 WOULD HAVE TO RISE FAR ABOVE THIS JADED, CORRUPT EXISTENCE TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD BUT NOT BE PART OF IT.
"THERE ARE NO HEROES IN 2099.
AT LEAST, NOT YET.

Marks REMARKS

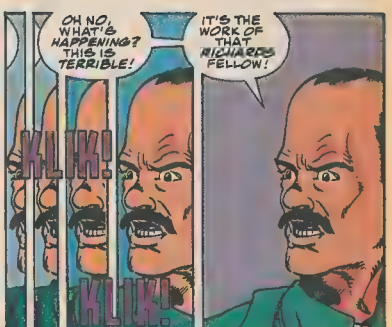
Time to write another timely installment of MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE's most time-consuming column. My subject this month: (what else?) time. The subject of how the internal passage of time in the pages of Marvel Comics relates to its readers' external experience of time is a subject I've already covered, some time ago (if you'll pardon the expression). This time 'round I want to talk about time travel.

One of the more interesting aspects of my job as Senior Executive Editor is I was the one who got to research, work out, and write up the rules pertaining to time travel in the Marvel Universe for our in-house editors' policy handbook. Before I came on the scene, Marvel — a publishing outfit which prides itself on its internal consistency — was a wee bit relaxed when it came to how time travel worked. Writers were free to have it work every which way (including loose) with no regard to what had already been established. Once I was designated consistency cop, it was up to me to develop the rules of M.U. time travel using the consensus of information. It was a job I must admit I relished since, ever since my self-published fanzine days, I was interested in the way fictional realities worked. So, printed here for a general audience for the first time are Marvel's official rules of time travel. . .

"Time travel should be used very sparingly in order to keep the phenomenon as special as possible. To ensure that future usages of the phenomenon are kept consistent with the majority of past usages, observe the following principles:

"1. The Marvel Universe is part of a multiverse (a system of related universes) which diverge from one another at critical junctures. (This has been demonstrated in numerous issues of WHAT IF. . .? as well as other titles.)

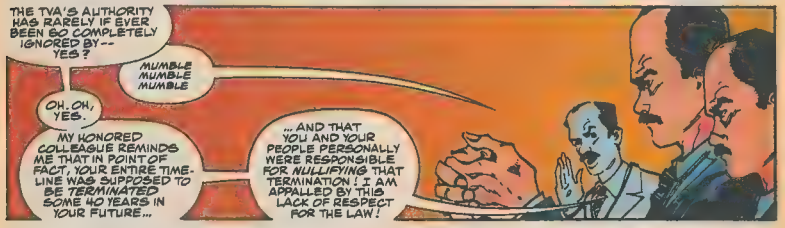
"2. The act of time travel always produces a critical juncture diverging a new alternate timeline or world at the moment one enters the reality of another time period, past or future of the time period one set out from. It creates one timeline where an extratemporal person or element materialized via time travel, and one 'virgin' timeline where that person or element did not.



"3. Because it is impossible to travel to the 'virgin' timeline (the timeline one did not travel to), and because divergent timelines are dimensionally displaced from one's root timeline, all time travel actually involves dimension travel. A time traveler does not truly travel straight backwards or forwards in time, but backwards or forwards and a bit off to the side to a divergent timeline now running parallel to one's timeline of origin. Since this timeline will have been identical to the 'virgin' timeline until the moment of divergence, there will be virtually no differences between the two timelines until the time traveler's actions produce some. Consequently, most time travelers have no reason to be aware that they are not on the 'virgin' timeline.

"4. If one travels a second time to an era one has already been to, one will not materialize on the 'virgin' timeline nor the timeline diverged by one's previous trip, but a third timeline diverged from one or the other. A time traveler can never travel back to the exact same timeline more than once. Again, since the second and third divergent timelines are identical until the time traveler's arrival, they will be indistinguishable at first.

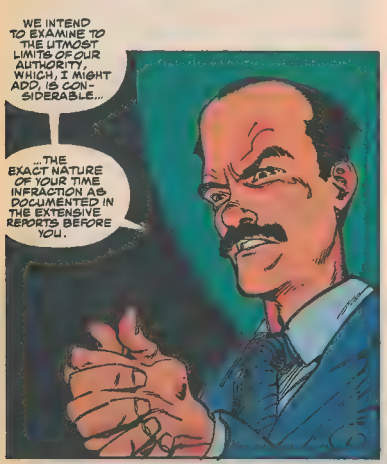
"5. When one travels a second time to any era in which one already exists (either indigenously or through time travel), it will be possible to meet a temporal counterpart of one's self already there. A new counterpart diverges into being every single time a time traveler travels to a timeline one already exists in. Subsequently, multiple temporal counterparts could co-exist through multiple time trips to the same time period.


THE TVA'S AUTHORITY HAS RARELY IF EVER BEEN SO COMPLETELY IGNORED BY-- YES?
MUMBLE MUMBLE MUMBLE
OH. OH, YES.
MY HONORED COLLEAGUE REMINDS ME THAT IN POINT OF FACT, YOUR ENTIRE TIMELINE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE TERMINATED SOME NO YEARS IN YOUR FUTURE...
... AND THAT YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE PERSONALLY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR NULLIFYING THAT TERMINATION! I AM APPALLED BY THIS LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE LAW!

"6. The co-existence of multiple counterparts of the same being on one timeline does not cause time para-

doxes. Time paradoxes (a paradox being a set of contradictory conditions) are only possible in single timeline universes.

"7. Altering an incident in the past will indeed affect the future reality of the timeline diverged by the time traveler's presence. One can create any number of different divergences by one's significant actions, the act of time travel being but the first. Whether one will be able to return to the present of the timeline where one did no reality-tampering divergences or one which diverged as a consequence of one's past actions is a function of the means of time travel.


WE INTEND TO EXAMINE TO THE UTMOST LIMITS OF OUR AUTHORITY, WHICH, I MIGHT ADD, IS CONSIDERABLE...
...THE EXACT NATURE OF YOUR TIME INFRACTION AS DOCUMENTED IN THE EXTENSIVE REPORTS BEFORE YOU.

"8. Returning to one's present also creates a divergent reality (a timeline where one returned, another where one did not). If one has been gone any length of time, one may find differences have accumulated in accordance with the length of time one was away. (This is no different than if one returned to one's home after a simple trip to another city rather than another time period.)

"9. Selective alterations in the present as a consequence of the time traveler's actions in the past do not occur. (For instance, the fading of Marty McFly's image from a family portrait in *Back to the Future* would not happen in the Marvel Universe.) An alteration in the past will create an entirely new timeline with events proceeding smoothly from the point of divergence. To the denizens of that time line's 'present,' the past is a continuous series of events that always happened as they happened. Were one to see selective dematerializations, they would either be caused by something other than the act of time travel unto itself or would be hallucinations.

"10. There are three possible methods of time travel in the Marvel Universe:

a. Time travel machines (like Doctor Doom's or Kang's).

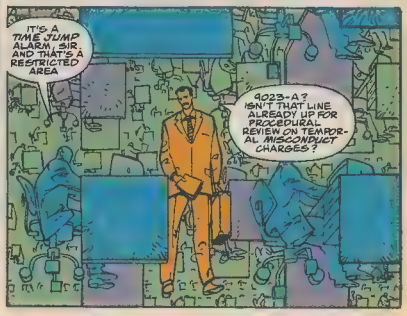
b. Magic (like that used by Dr. Strange or the hammer of Thor before that enchantment was removed).

c. Personally-generated energy (the power cosmic enabled the Silver Surfer to breach the timestream on more than one occasion). All methods involve generating "chronal displacement inertia" freeing one from one's chronological position in the timestream (just as escape velocity frees one from earth's gravitation), skimming through the extra-temporal realm outside the timestream (sometimes called Limbo), and re-entering the timestream at another chronological position. Because no time exists outside the timestream, the perceived duration of the passage through Limbo may be anything from non-existent to an eternity.

"11. If any of the above is confusing to you or your writers, you may ask the Senior Executive Editor for clarification. If it still is confusing, you should not be doing a time travel story. The above principles only apply to the Marvel Universe; other fictional realities may have other rules of time travel."

That's it, the full text of the Time Travel section in the Marvel editors' handbook. Despite the occasional technical term or two, this is as clear and most straightforward I can be on this admittedly difficult subject. Like any set of rules, they can be perceived as stifling, depending on a writer's mindset. Some writers are in love with the idea of paradox and keep thinking they've discovered a new paradox so cool it deserves to be put in a Marvel mag. Personally, I find the rules reassuring, but I'm a wee bit prejudiced. I've done a few stories involving time travel, including one in two of this summer's annuals (no plugs allowed), and I find the guidelines both easy and fun to work within.

Okay, folks, time to get out of here. Till next time, watch those divergences!

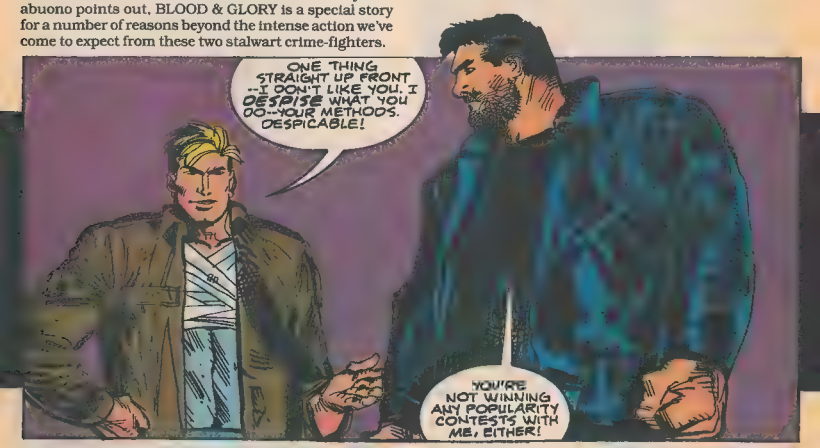

IT'S A TIME JUMP ALARM, SIR, AND THAT'S A RESTRICTED AREA
9023-A? ISN'T THAT LINE ALREADY UP FOR PROCEDURAL REVIEW ON TEMPORAL MISCONDUCT CHARGES?

Mark Gruenwald

Hot Sheet

Summer? It's still Summer? Is anyone besides me feeling like a baked potato? Actually, years ago, I formed some habits to help beat the heat — intense outdoor physical activity before noon only and barbecues only if the grill is lit after sundown. So what do I do with those long afternoons? What any of you reading this column do: I grab a stack of the latest Marvel comics and stretch out on the couch for a little adventure. And as this summer dies down, Marvel wants to make sure that there are plenty of good books with which to fan off the heat.

One sure-fire hit guaranteed to send the mercury upwards this August is the long-anticipated Punisher/Captain America bookshelf limited series, BLOOD & GLORY. A buzz went through the comics world a year ago when this book was announced and you can rest assured that it has been well worth the wait. This title seems to offer readers everything — action, intrigue, conflict. . . . However, as retail store owner Gary Colabuono points out, BLOOD & GLORY is a special story for a number of reasons beyond the intense action we've come to expect from these two stalwart crime-fighters.


ONE THING STRAIGHT UP FRONT --I DON'T LIKE YOU. I DESPISE WHAT YOU DO--YOUR METHODS. DESPICABLE!
YOU'RE NOT WINNING ANY POPULARITY CONTESTS WITH ME, EITHER!

"This series has a fascinating spin on it. It's an intense character study contrasting two of Marvel's greatest heroes. Each has a world view formed by their wartime experiences — Cap's in the last 'good war' (WWII), and Punisher's in the quagmire of Viet Nam." I asked Gary to explain how this similar but varied background of the two characters came through for him in BLOOD & GLORY. "Even though both work for justice, Cap is a friend of the American government and Punisher works outside the law." So? "So, when they bump into each other on the trail of a ruthless dictator — watch out!"

Gary is, of course, referring to the intense conflict expertly laid bare by co-authors Dan Chichester and Margaret Clark. And gritty, realistic writing demands an artist equipped to jump both into the concrete jungles of the United States and the forested ones of Central America. For that task, editor Ralph Macchio brought in artist Klaus Janson, whose realistic style has been entertaining fans for years. Marvel gave some lucky people a sneak peek at Janson's pages for BLOOD & GLORY and they went crazy for his art. "The hot lead starts flying and the shield starts slinging in page after page of glorious Marvel action!" Colabuono exclaimed. "Klaus Janson's renditions of Cap and Punisher are memorable studies of mass, mood, and movement. This is a hot book!" *Steve's Comic Relief* owner, Steve Gursky, was just as enthusiastic over the project. "Klaus Janson's art style is action packed, yet still tells an exciting straight forward story. Chichester and Clark's tale of Cap and the Punisher's mutual, yet different battle against a foreign dictator is compelling."

Shifting gears a bit, nearly everyone who's seen Marvel's late summer schedule is raving about one of the best reality-based comic books ever produced, Cindy Goff and Rafael Nieves' BLOODLINES: A TALE FROM THE HEART OF AFRICA (with art by Seitu Hayden). Like Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer-winning *Maus*, BLOODLINES pushes the boundaries of comic book storytelling by imposing the comic form on reality (as opposed to what traditional comic books do, which is to inject reality into comics). The fact-based BLOODLINES is a direct sequel to 1990's critically acclaimed TALES FROM THE HEART and, as such, will deal with the story of Cathy Grant, a Peace Corps volunteer who meets with conflict and racism in Central Africa.

Many people from around the comic book industry feel that BLOODLINES is a story that just had to be told and, as such, warrants a special place in reader's hearts. "BLOODLINES is not about big-muscled people beating or killing each other," reminds Steve Gursky. "It's a quiet, sensitive story. . . It deserves your attention." Fellow retailer Colabuono echoes these sentiments. "The sequel. . .is a beautifully written and drawn study of human feelings. This reality-based comic reflects the potential of the comic book art form beyond the superhero genre. The storytelling is first-rate and Seitu Hayden's artwork is breathtaking. I'm delighted that

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Marvel has chosen to continue showcasing quality projects like this. I hope to see more Marvel-published TALES FROM THE HEART in the future." Editors and creators inside Marvel feel the same way about this project. "It may seem strange, because I'm the

I like the *Stranger in a Strange Land* feel of it, and the fact that the lead character is a real person.

PUNISHER and 'NAM editor," Don Daley offered, "but I like TALES FROM THE HEART. I like the *Stranger in a Strange Land* feel of it, and the fact that the lead character is a real person. It's real drama." Long-time superhero writer Fabian Nicieza feels the same about BLOODLINES. "If Cindy and Rafael are writing it, I know I'm going to like it. There's no spandex here—just a lot of humanity."

Another sequel which has industry insiders buzzing is Ted McKeever's METROPOL AD, which will pick up where its predecessor left off, in this case with the near destruction of mankind. Fans of McKeever's work know that this book will have a tangible feel to it as well as dynamic art and bold writing, and new fans will be given a ripped-bare look at one of comicdom's most inventive minds. Dana Moreshead, Marvel's Advertising Art Director, relates his view of this bold creator. "Ted McKeever continues his brand of surreal realism that made the first volume of this work so exciting. The expanded bookshelf format is an outstanding showcase for Ted's storytelling; the art and color take on new levels here. A dramatic story combined with phenomenal art has always made for a good comic. METROPOL AD will be no exception!" Ralph Macchio, who spends most of his time in the Marvel Universe as editor of such super-hero comics as THOR, CAPTAIN AMERICA, and DAREDEVIL, offered his opinion as to the quality and importance of such a project as well. "I happen to like METROPOL a lot. I think that METROPOL, to me personally, is the reason that the separate Epic Comics line exists — to do stuff like this. Ted McKeever has done something that is wholly original. It is innovative and I enjoy it very much. I hope he continues to produce for Epic for as long as he has these great ideas!"

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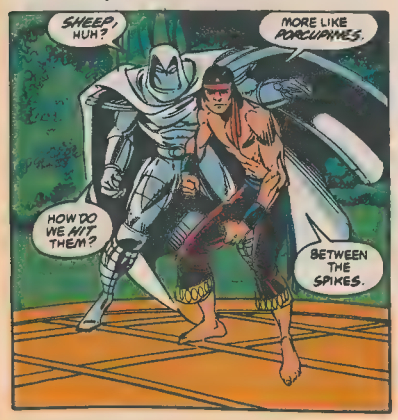
Back in the Marvel Universe, exciting things are in the works for a few characters who appear already in various monthly books. These break-out characters are set to take center stage in either miniseries or specials, so keep your eyes peeled.

First, from the pages of NEW WARRIORS, comes NIGHT THRASHER: FOUR CONTROL. The brash young leader of Marvel's youngest super-team is determined to uncover the mysteries of his past and put a lid on crime, and this new limited series will give him just that opportunity. It's a character spotlight that some feel was a long time in coming and well worth the wait, especially given the dynamite creative team set to tell his tale, NEW WARRIORS writer Fabian Nicieza and artist Dave Hoover. "NIGHT THRASHER looks most impressive," offered Buddy Saunders of *Lone Star Comics*. "The interesting storyline is beautifully rendered by Dave Hoover. His artwork has been impressive for some time, but this could be the project that gives him some much-deserved recognition." Shelton Drum of *Heroes Aren't Hard To Find* felt the same way after getting a look at samples from NIGHT THRASHER #1. "I think that Marveldom will witness the emergence of a major new talent from NIGHT THRASHER. Dave Hoover's pencils are fantastic, and Fabian Nicieza is already the hottest writer in the Bullpen, so this one can't miss. And fan favorite artist Mark Bagley provides some 'jump off the shelf' covers. Catch 'em while you can or this series will leave the comic shop without you."

Another character also gets an extra bow in the spotlight in August as well, though he does have his own monthly title. The MOON KNIGHT SPECIAL will help draw attention to this long-time hero in a high-impact kung fu-fest by writer Doug Moench. Shelton Drum was especially excited by the announcement of this special. "Kung Fu fans beware," he warns, "because this one features the long-awaited, eagerly hoped for return of Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu. Heroes from the seventies are hot again, and Shang-Chi was the best. I hope this is a try-out for him to have his own title." Maybe, Shelton — maybe!



Finally, I just couldn't let another "Hot Sheet" go by without offering some Marvel staffers the chance to share their excitement over some of their favorite books. BARBIE, DARKHOLD and LEGION OF NIGHT Editor Hildy Mesnik, for example, is extremely excited over one of Marvel U.K.'s fledgling titles, MOTORMOUTH, the fast-paced street-tech series starring a brash young punk-girl whose "in your face" attitude may just prove the death of her. "I like MOTORMOUTH

La femme Motormouth has cool, cruel shoes and a %&$# great way with words!

—, the character is so #@%&?* appealing, and I really enjoy the art, especially the coloring! La femme Motormouth has cool, cruel shoes and a %&$#@ great way with words!" Hildy's assistant and sometimes PUNISHER penciler, Kevin Kobasic, took a less colorful but equally exuberant approach when commenting on one of his favorites, PUNISHER: WAR ZONE. "Finally," he chimes, "a bloody good comic book! Chuck Dixon writes the Punisher as the hard-driving, belligerent nut job he should be, and the story moves at breakneck speed. Romita Jr. and Janson bring out all of the best of each other's styles. Their art's big, bold, tough, dirty, and absolutely gorgeous!"

Finally, there are the words of Marvel Executive Editor and CAPTAIN AMERICA scribe Mark Gruenwald, whose taste for comic books are of god-like proportions. "THOR is one of the most consistently interesting, ever-evolving, most unpredictable, solidly-told series. Nobody mixes up the sub-plot stew like Tom [DeFalco] 'n' Ron [Frenz], and pays off so consistently. THOR's always been a favorite of mine, but these days it's in my Top Five every month!"

And with enthusiasm like that, it's hard to see myself spending much more time next to the pool unless I have a big batch of comics to shade me from the sun! Until next time, beat the heat the Marvel way!

Jerry Novick

Tom M TALKS

"The Stronger My Character, The Faster He Sells!"

Has anyone ever tried to sell you a used car? Not the most pleasant of experiences. . .especially if it's a good friend who honestly treasures his faithful vehicle. He'll describe it in such loving detail, such glowing terms, that you'll be convinced it's a masterpiece of automotive engineering. Unfortunately, it looks as bruised and battered as Daredevil after a battle with the X-Men.

And yet, your friend sincerely cannot see its defects. In fact, he seems to have a rationale for every dent, every ding, every rip. He'll even try to convince you that there's a distinct advantage to a car that won't start. . .it saves you money on gas!

Since your friend is emotionally attached to his car, he is blind to all of its faults.

But, you don't want excuses.

You need a car that works.

Sometimes I feel that all of my friends are trying to sell me their old cars. However, the things being sold aren't cars, nor are they necessarily old.

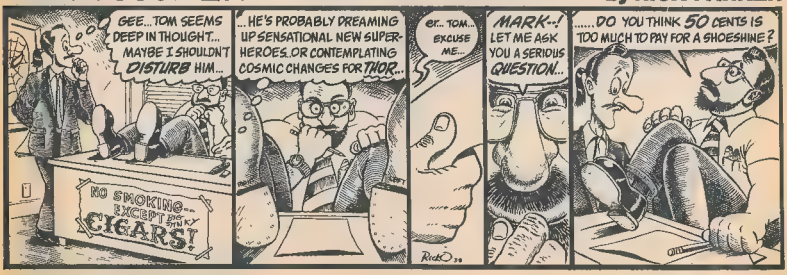
They're "characters!" (And I'm not referring to the people doing the selling. . .although that term can easily be applied to most of them!)

Unfortunately, most of these "characters" are little more than a cool name, an interesting visual and a power directly copied off a current Marvel character. (Sometimes the names and visuals are also copied, but that's a completely different problem!) The sad truth is that these aren't true characters. They're only ciphers! Pale imitations of the real thing! Their creators substitute an attitude for a real personality, and style for substance.

A real character can stand up to serious scrutiny. They're crafted to last many lifetimes. Ciphers are transients who quickly fade into obscurity. They're only as hot as their creator.

THE BOSSMEN

by RICK PARKER


GEE...TOM SEEMS DEEP IN THOUGHT... MAYBE I SHOULDN'T DISTURB HIM...
NO SMOKING... EXCEPT BY CIGARS!
...HE'S PROBABLY DREAMING UP SENSATIONAL NEW SUPER-HEROES OR CONTEMPLATING COSMIC CHANGES FOR THOR...
er... TOM... EXCUSE ME...
MARK--! LET ME ASK YOU A SERIOUS QUESTION...
.....DO YOU THINK 50 CENTS IS TOO MUCH TO PAY FOR A SHOESHINE?

And yet, we're all emotionally attached to our creations. We're all a little blind to their faults. How do we know when we've come up with a masterpiece of creative engineering or a recycled old wreck?

We can start by analyzing our characters, and seeing how well they stand up to close scrutiny.

The first question is rather obvious. . .**Who is this character?**

Your answer should be a lot more than a name. . . although an intriguing name is very important. (You should also make certain that no one else is using that name! Not Marvel nor any other comic book company. At least once a week someone offers me a name that's already in use. If I wanted to use old names, I wouldn't need new writers.)

You should be totally intimate with this character, and understand exactly how s/he would interact with any possible object, idea, person or situation. Think through her/his personality, personal philosophy, educational background, social history, style of dress, likes and dislikes. Every detail is important. A middle class, college educated character tends to act, dress, think and speak very differently from an economically challenged, streetwise hustler.

As in real life, characters rarely face clear black or white choices in well-written comic books. The subtler the shades of gray, the clearer the character is defined. Would your character choose to save the life of a friend if it meant that a bus load of innocent children had to die? If s/he had to make a single choice. . .would s/he protect the innocent, uphold the law, or punish the guilty?

An interesting career will also provide a rich playing ground for your character. Detail the one s/he has, and the one s/he wishes s/he had.

Real people have past histories and families. So do real characters! Know what your character's life was like before s/he entered your story, and understand how her/his life has been changed as a direct result of your story. A character's past tells us much about her/his present and future.

What makes this particular character different from all others?

If you want to write stories which feature this character, I have to assume that there is something intriguing, unique or special about her/him. Is it a truly remarkable power or talent, an interesting mannerism, or a particular way of looking at the world?

Analyze that special something, and make certain that it really is special. If her/his only super power is the ability to fly. . .think about all of the other flying heroes which currently exist or have existed. There's no pressing need for another winged adventurer. . .not unless s/he is significantly different from all others. (Yeah, yeah, I know that I helped create Quicksand, but I was emotionally involved, and blind to all of her faults!)

Playing "mix and match" almost never works. S/he flies like the Vulture, has claws like Wolverine, can absorb personalities like Rogue and types faster than Fabian Nicieza! That isn't a character, it's a smorgasbord! (Although, we really could use a few more writers as talented as Fabian.)

Be original! Be creative! Be daring! And, most of all, be brutal with yourself! Don't accept any lame excuses on your part! Your readers deserve the very best!

If you honestly believe that all of the good powers have already been taken, you're only wasting your time!

How does this character function?

How do her/his powers work? Every game or story follows certain established rules. The same applies to a character's powers. How do they turn on? When do they turn off? What are their limits, their weaknesses, their advantages and disadvantages? As the character's creator, you can make these powers function any way you say they do. . .as long as you play fair with your readers,

and give at least a passing nod to logic and real science. (Readers tend to be very forgiving if you don't abuse their trust by being *completely* ridiculous.)

How does her/his life work? Does her/his status quo allow for easy access into stories? A submarine captain who spends most of his life underwater wouldn't be a great choice for membership in the Avengers!

Needless to say, the how questions lead right back into the who and what questions!

Unfortunately, the most important question of all. . . **Why does this character do the things s/he does?**. . .is a topic worthy of far more space than I have left. We'll have to save it for a future column.

Thanks for being there!

Tom DeFalco

What happened to the Inhuman who stepped on a rusty nail?

He got LOCKJAW!

Send your letters to: MARVEL AGE MAGAZINE, c/o Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

Attention correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your complete name and address, though we will gladly withhold that info on request!

This month's letter column title comes to us from John Safin of Syracuse, NY, and it's not just a spiffy title — it's also the opening line in our hilarious new stand-up comedy routine, coming soon to a Catskills resort near you! Thanks a-lot, John. We'll bet you've got a million of 'em.

As for the rest of you out there, if you've also got a million of them — or just a nifty idea for a letter column title — send it on in! And don't forget: we're still trying to decide whether to give this column a permanent name or keep it rotating every month, so send in your vote and make your opinion heard, okay?

Hey guys:

I have a rather odd question for you. By now, everyone has heard of Wendi and Richard Pini, right? Well, I'll betcha that in 1976, when GHOST RIDER vol. 2 #18 came out, they had a lot fewer "friends." So how is it that their names were used for filler characters on page 11 of the already-classic GHOST RIDER #18? I'm sure there's some kind of interesting story behind it. Tony Isabella, who now writes a column for the *Comics Buyer's Guide*, wrote the story, so maybe he could get to the bottom of this.

Michael Hranek
11 Hanlon Dr.
Marlboro, MA 01752

No great puzzle, Michael. Those characters were called Wendi and Richard Pini because those were their names! Astonishing coincidence, huh?

Okay, okay, we'll give you a straight answer, too. Actually, it's pretty common for writers and artists to include their friends in comics stories as an in-joke and a way to say "hi." Even the guy who writes this column, Sholly Fisch, has appeared in roles ranging from a secret service man to a Texas gangster to the guy who drove Steve Rogers to the place where he first became Captain America. The only problem is, he's now a wholly-owned trademark of Marvel Comics, which makes it a little tough to cash checks.

Dear Marvel staff:

I have a suggestion I think you should consider: Bring back the 1950's Marvel Boy! Yes, you say, how could that ever be when Quasar has his own monthly title, and we all know that Marvel Boy eventually became the murderous Crusader and died shortly afterward? It's simple to solve this problem: Simply create an alternate timeline (kinda like a WHAT IF. . .? story) in which that never happened. You're already doing things like that, such as in the SPIDER-MAN 2099 title.

Howzabout it, guys? I imagine a guy could have quite a bit of fun with Marvel Boy shuttling back and forth from Earth to Uranus with the world of the 1950's as a setting, and I always liked Marvel Boy's costume and powers. Hope you consider it.

James R. Babb
Box 3322
Charleston, WV 25333

To tell you the truth, James, we're fans of the Golden Age Marvel Boy ourselves. (For those of you who don't know what we're talking about, Marvel Boy was a hero who appeared in his own 1950's series. An Earthling raised on Uranus, Marvel Boy fought Earthbound criminals with flashing fists and an array of weapons produced by alien science. About twenty years later, he turned up as a villain called the Crusader, at which point he died in battle with the Fantastic Four.) We're sorry to say that a new Marvel Boy series doesn't seem too likely in the immediate future, given that Marvel Boy's successor, Quasar, is still running around, and there's a new hero named Marvel Boy in THE

NEW WARRIORS. Heck, we already get confused by the fact that both the FF and the Avengers have members called the Human Torch!

Nonetheless, if you'd like to read up on some of Marvel Boy's classic Golden Age adventures without spending the king's ransom the original issues command these days, check your local comic specialty shop for back issues of two of Marvel's old reprint series. A bunch of Marvel Boy stories were reprinted in MARVEL SUPER-ACTION and MARVEL SUPER-HEROES. Happy hunting!

While it may be fun to hunt for old comic books, one thing that no one should ever have to hunt for is our LETTER OF THE MONTH, that lucky missive that we think will be of particular interest to Marveldom at large! That's why we print it against an easy-to-find yellow background. . ..

This time around, our Letter of the Month concerns a different kind of hunt, though, as one correspondent searches for the source of a certain wall-crawler's appeal. . .

Dear Spider-Writers:

Seeing how it is Spidey's thirtieth anniversary, I would like to add my humble opinions to the multitude of others that I am sure you are receiving.

Spider-Man has always been my favorite super hero. When I started collecting Spider-Man comics, I couldn't even read. I bought him because he was a visually stunning character. All that I was interested in at the time were the pictures. Of course, that has changed over the years, but my love for Spidey has never ceased. He is what I would call "the all-purpose super hero." He has met, fought, or befriended almost every character in the Marvel Universe, and even some from without, such as Superman, Wonder Woman, Lex Luthor, and the Parasite. He's met the original cast of *Saturday Night Live*, the Transformers, and Jay Leno. He has been to the far corners of space and time, died and been resurrected at least four different times, been mutated countless times, and even taught the nigh-omnipotent Beyonder how to use the restroom. But whether he is saving the universe or fighting a gang of cheap crooks, his uniquely compelling powers and personality guarantee a good time.

Spider-Man is one of the most popular characters in comics for several reasons:

1) He has interesting capabilities.

2) He has a colorful and unique costume.

3) He has a real life, with real problems. You never see Captain America come down with a cold or have trouble paying the rent.

4) He has an incredible assortment of villains. For that matter, he has more enemies than any other character in the Marvel Universe, from the crafty Chamelson to the demi-god Thanos.

5) He has an extensive supporting cast. Peter Parker's friends and loved ones are as diverse as his enemies.

6) He possesses a strong set of moral values. He abhors killing under any circumstances. He is completely faithful to his wife and friends. He pulls his punches and doesn't intentionally cripple criminals. He always thinks of others' needs before his own. He will even fight to save the life of his greatest enemy. He doesn't drink or smoke and is an all-around nice guy.

7) He has indomitable will power. He never gives up, despite often-overwhelming odds.

8) He has a hilarious sense of humor and irony. No matter how grim the situation, he adamantly refuses to take life completely seriously.

9) He isn't invincible. He can't leap tall buildings in a single bound, move faster than the speed of light, or push the planet Earth out of its orbit with his bare hands. His chest doesn't repel bullets, and he does tire after many hours.

10) He isn't an arrogant snob. Many heroes have egos larger than some of the villains. Peter is downright insecure. He often jokes to cover this up, and although it looks like an inflated ego, it is actually quite the opposite. 11) He works well with other heroes.

12) He isn't afraid to be himself.

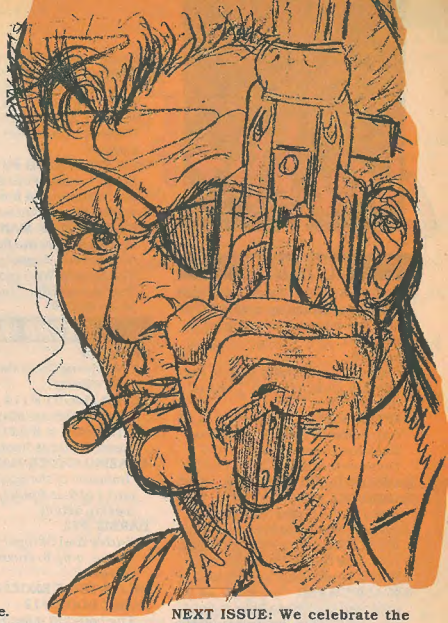
13) He is extremely intelligent and incredibly resourceful.

Well, before this letter reaches book-length, I'd better quit. Thanks for listening, until J. Jonah Jameson realizes what a jerk he's been all these years, Make Mine Marvel!

James T. Dysart
20110 SE Ridgecrest Dr.
Sandy, OR 97055

Gee, James, you forgot "thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent." All kidding aside, though, we think you've done a pretty good job at covering all the bases for our favorite web-spinner, and it raises an interesting

issue for all you amateur psychologists out there in letter-land. What do you think makes *your* favorite characters into the people they are? Send us your opinions, and (assuming they're no longer than a page or two, handwritten or typed and double-spaced) we'll see what we can do about printing a few of them.



Dear Marvel:

I recently learned of Rob Liefeld leaving Marvel and joining another comics company, and I understand that some others joined him. Is it true that Todd McFarlane also defected to the same company? If so, how will this affect Marvel? Who else left Marvel? Why did they leave? Will this affect the prices of the comic books that these artists worked on?

Please answer some, if not all, of these questions.

Doug E. Seldeen
222 Ramona Pl.
Camarillo, CA 93010

Sure thing, Doug. It is indeed true that several artists recently got together to form a comics line of their own called Image Comics, and its charter roster of hot comics artists includes Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, Jim Valentino, Whilce Portacio, and Erik Larsen. We wish the guys well in their new venture.

As far as how their move will affect Marvel, the primary effect has been to lead us to come up with new creative teams for most of the series they'd been working on. Even so, don't forget that the guys have always worked for Marvel on a freelance basis, so we wouldn't be surprised if one or more of them does in the future.

Regarding your question about whether the move will affect the value of their past work, the bottom line on that sort of question is always that things are worth whatever people are willing to pay for them, so it'll probably take a while to come up with an appropriate price tag. Fort Knox or bargain bin? Hmm... It's the mystery of life that makes it worth living, isn't it?

NEXT ISSUE: We celebrate the INCREDIBLE HULK anniversary milestone with a special essay by Peter David, revealing the hideous truth behind comic book writing. Also, it's part two of "Making Masterpieces," with an exclusive sample card from the new *Marvel Masterpieces* from Skybox, and British correspondent and editor Steve White uncovers the secrets of the DINOSAURS.

Get your microfilm viewers ready, because here comes yet another of our favorite agents, ready to pass along a vital state secret or two. If you're a member of this elite fraternity and you'd like to be included in this section, all you have to do is write to us on WAM stationery or simply include your WAM membership number with your letter.

Dear MARVEL AGE:

A few months ago, my girlfriend asked me to marry her. Now, don't get me wrong; I love her very much, but I'm just not ready to tie the knot. So I told her I'd marry her when U.S. Agent got his own book, much to her chagrin.

A few months ago, she heard that U.S. Agent was indeed going to get a limited series. Is this true?! I'm very interested, as you might guess. She keeps reminding me of my promise and now wants to set a date.

Please, please, tell me what's going on; is it true? Should I get fitted for a tux anytime soon? How soon? I'm not sure if so much has ever hinged on one book — at least on my account!

WAM Agent #01481
PSC #2, Box 2266
Honolulu, HI 96853

Break out that tux, "Agent!" There is indeed a U.S. AGENT limited series in the works, written by CAPTAIN AMERICA scripter Mark Gruenwald and penciled by M.C. Wyman. The scheduling isn't completely definite yet, so stay tuned for further details.

***Sniff* It always makes us feel all warm inside to bring people together. In fact, now that we know the good news, we'd better hurry out to buy some Lenox china and demitasse cups before they're all sold out. But don't worry — we'll be back again, pickin' and grinnin' for you in just thirty short days.**

Y'all come back now, hear?

checklist

FIRST WEEK

AVENGERS WEST COAST #88 1.25
Wolverine teams up with AWC to stop the evil mutant group, Bogatyri.

CAGE #8 1.25
Cage battles Wonder Man in the climatic conclusion to "The Evil and the Cure."

CAPTAIN AMERICA #409 1.25
Cap takes on Crossbones & the Skeleton Crew to save Diamondback.

DAREDEVIL #310 1.25

DARKHAWK #21 1.25
Part 1 of the 5-part "Return to Forever" storyline that reveals much of Darkhawk's mysterious past. The covers from #21-24 form a blockbuster poster, too!

EXCALIBUR #56 1.75
Psylocke joins Excalibur to fight her own brother, Jamie Braddock.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #114 1.50

MARVEL MASTERWORKS #20 34.95
Reprinting the first twelve classic Iron Man stories by Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and Don Heck!

NAMOR #32 1.25
It's the avenging son of Atlantis vs. the evil lord of Latveria, as Namor faces his final showdown with Dr. Doom.

NIGHT THRASHER #2 1.75
Night Thrasher fights for his life in Hong Kong against the bio-engineered assassin-for-hire, Tantrum.

NIGHTSTALKERS #1 1.75
Ghost Rider & Blaze guest star in the poly-bagged premiere issue with fold-out poster.

NOMAD #7 1.75
Gambit's evil doppelganger attacks Nomad and Bucky.

ORIGINAL GHOST RIDER #5 1.75

SHE-HULK #45 1.75

SPIDER-MAN 2099 #1 1.25
The thrilling debut of Marvel's all-new 21st century wall-crawler.

SWEET XVI: BACK TO SCHOOL 2.25
Stranger than Melrose Place, more hysterical than Beverly Hills — the teens of ancient Rome are back!

TERROR INC. #5 1.75
Dr. Strange joins Terror against the legions of hell in the stunning conclusion to "Hell and Back."

TOXIC CRUSADERS #7 1.25

UNCANNY X-MEN #294 1.25
Professor X has been shot — by Cable?!

WCW WRESTLING #8 1.25
Sting rumbles Paul E.'s Dangerous Alliance in a ten-man elimination round contest.

WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #94 1.25
Spidey's in for the fight of his life and his evil doppelganger (from The Infinity War) teams up with the Demogoblin. Guest-starring Moon Knight.

SECOND WEEK

AKIRA #6 14.95
Continuing the collected AKIRA color library.

ALPHA FLIGHT #114 1.75
Weapon Omega may have to revert back to Wild Child to learn more about his "roots."

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #368 2.95
"Invasion of the Spider Slayers" part 1 of 6 as Spidey begins bi-weekly action.

BARBIE #23 1.25
Barbie and Skipper travel to Maine, only to encounter a giant lobster!

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT COMIC BOOK #12 1.25
The boys bid a fond farewell to friends and fans in their last issue finale.

CABLE #2 2.50
It's the prelude to the fall mutant crossover as Kane and Cable join forces to hunt down Stryfe.

DARKHOLD: PAGES FROM THE BOOK OF SINS #2 1.75
The Redeemers travel to Washington to stop a psychotic pyromaniac.

GHOST RIDER #31 1.75
Blaze, Morbius, the Night Stalkers & the Darkhold Redeemers all guest-star in the fantastic, final chapter of "Rise of the Midnight Sons."

GROO THE WANDERER #95 2.25

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #30 1.25

METROPOL A.D. #2 2.95
The Pipe Angels Who Watch must destroy the demons invading the city.

ONYX OVERLORD #2 2.50
Finnegar & Dalxtrey fight their way across Random Earth to save the Airtight Garage.

PENDRAGON II #5 1.75
The villainous Magpie returns from issue #3 to take revenge on the knights.

PUNISHER/CAPTAIN AMERICA: BLOOD AND GLORY #2 5.95
Cap fights for his life as the Punisher tracks down a drug-running operation that leads him to the door of the Attorney General.

PUNISHER WAR ZONE #9 1.75
The Magnificent Seven, a group of seven super-powered assassins, seek to kill the Punisher.

QUASAR #40 1.25
Kid Reaper is back and Quasar must defeat him to return to the land of the living.

SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #203 2.25
Conan faces the Stygian wizard Hak-Heru in "The City of Magicians" part 2.

SILVER SABLE #6 1.25
Deathlok joins the Wild Pack to locate the stolen Statue of Liberty.

SLEEPWALKER #18 1.25
Professor X aids Sleepy in psychically combating the hordes of the Magus.

THOR #453 1.25
The long-awaited return of the evil Loki kicks off the Thor bi-weeklies.

WOLVERINE #63 1.75
Sabretooth and the Silver Fox join Wolvie to uncover the shocking secrets of their mysterious pasts.

WONDER MAN #15 1.25
Most every hero in the Marvel Universe guest-stars to battle their evil doppelgangers as the Infinity War reaches its thrilling climax.

THIRD WEEK

AVENGERS #356 1.25

CONAN #262 1.25
An evil sorceress tranforms into a giant panther to butcher the battling barbarian.

EXCALIBUR #57 1.75
Mystique and Forge appear in England to confront Nightcrawler.

FISH POLICE #2 1.25
The plot thickens as Detective Gill meets with the nefarious Dr. Calamari.

G.I. JOE #129 1.25

HELL'S ANGELS #5 1.75
Special guest stars: The X-Men.

INCREDIBLE HULK #399 2.25
Bruce Banner returns to the site where the Hulk ws born. Guest-starring the Fantastic Four, Dr. Strange & Henry Pym.

MARVEL AGE #118 1.50
Special poly-bagged issue includes a sample of the new Marvel Masterpieces trading cards.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #115 1.50
Cloak & Dagger join Wolvie, Ghosty and Giant-Man in a new storyline.

MARVEL TALES #267 1.25
Spidey dons his black costume to face the scheming Rose.

MORBIUS #3 1.75
It's Spider-Man vs. the Living Vampire in the grudge rematch of the year.

NICK FURY AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. #41 1.75
The earth-shaking conclusion to "Cold War of Nick Fury."

NIGHTBREED #21 2.25
The demonic god, Baphomet, battles his ancient foe, Ozymandias.

PUNISHER #72 1.25

REN & STIMPY #1 1.75
Cartoon's wackiest duo comes to Marvel in all-new outlandish adventures. This first issue is pre-bagged with special R&S airfoulers. Happy, happy, joy, joy!

SLAPSTICK #1 OF 4 1.25
The hilarious introduction of Marvel's newest and wackiest character ever.

SPIDER-MAN #28 2.95
Spidey investigates violence in the schools in "Something About A Gun" part 2.

WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #10 1.75
It's Thanos vs. Thanos in a battle that will determine the fate of the universe.

WHAT IF #43 1.25
What if Wolverine Had Married Mariko?

X-FACTOR #84 1.25
X-Factor must battle X-Force to capture the criminal Cable.

X-MEN #14 1.25
The Blue team joins X-Factor to attack X-Force as the Gold team faces Apocalypse's Four Horsemen.

X-MEN ANIMATION #1 1.25
The comic adaptation of the all-new X-Men animated TV series.

FOURTH WEEK

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #369 1.25
The Spider Slayers make their move in "Invasion of the Spider Slayers" part 2.

BARBIE FASHION #23 1.25

CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER #17 4.95
Clive Barker writes "The Harrowing," an all-new horrific storyline by the master himself.

CONAN SAGA #67 2.25
Conan's wedding to Zenobia is cut short by the evil sorcerer, Tsotha-Lanti.

DEATHLOK #17 1.75
Deathlok must stop the construction of a cyborg army to regain his human body. "Cyberwar" part 1 of 5.

FANTASTIC FOUR #370 1.25

INFINITY WAR #6 2.50
The cosmos-shaking conclusion to the Infinity War.

IRON MAN #286 1.25
Rhody, as the new Iron Man, fights Stark's former teammates, the Avengers West Coast.

JAMES BOND JR. #11 1.25
JB Jr. and the Warfield Academy travel to India to thwart the villainous S.C.U.M.

MARVEL REQUIRER #32 Free!

MOTORMOUTH #6 1.75
Special guest stars the Punisher, Excalibur & Nick Fury.

NEW WARRIORS #29 1.25
The Warriors wend their way to war-ravaged Trans-Sabal.

SILVER SURFER #74
Firelord, Nova and Airwalker join the Surfer to track down the last remaining herald of Galactus — Terrax the Terrible.

SOVIET SUPER SOLDIERS SPECTACULAR 2.00
A 64-page special of intrigue behind the Iron Curtain as Russia's mutant heroes fight one another over control of a nation.

SPIDER-MAN #194 1.25
"The Death of Vermin" — part 1.

THOR #54 1.25
Odin reveals the location of a true God of Thunder.

WARHEADS #6 1.75
Death's Head II joins the team to help defeat the immoral Mephisto.

WILLIAM SHATNER'S TEK WORLD #3 1.50
Jake Cardigan travels to Mexico to face his ex-lover, the revolutionary Warbride.

X-FORCE #16 1.25
X-Force surrenders to the X-Men as Cable attacks Bishop.

X-MEN CLASSIC #77 1.25
Wolverine seeks the Silver Samurai as his fiancée, Mariko calls off the wedding.

FIFTH WEEK

DR. STRANGE #47 1.75
Doc must save the Earth from an army of bloodthirsty demons unleashed by the maniacal Magus.

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #116 1.50
The conclusion to the Wolverine storyline, a new Iron Fist tale and the continuing Giant-Man story.

MOON KNIGHT #44 1.75
A deadly virus threatens to kill MK and only Dr. Strange & Reed Richards can save him.

'NAM #74 1.75
Part 2 of "Siege of An Loc."

PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL #48 1.75
A cop turns in his crooked co-workers in part 1 of "Payback."

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE #4 1.75
Hag and Troll return to transport Deathwatch to his final resting place.

WHAT THE?! #23 1.25

MARVEL AGE CROSSOVER GUIDE:

Infinity War

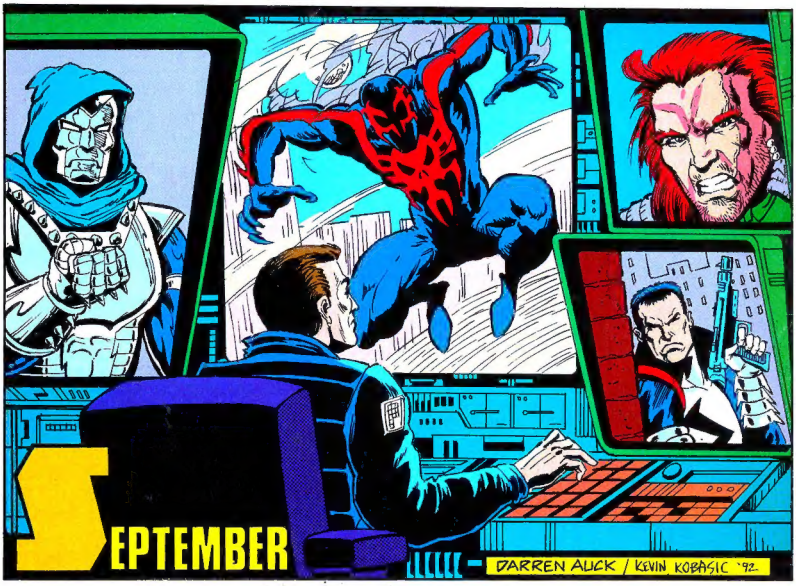
DR. STRANGE #47
FANTASTIC FOUR #370
INFINITY WAR #6
NOMAD #7
SLEEPWALKER #18
WARLOCK & THE INFINITY WATCH #10
WONDER MAN #15

Mutant Fall Crossovers

UNCANNY X-MEN #294
X-FACTOR #84
X-MEN #14
X-FORCE #16

Rise of the Midnight Sons

NIGHTSTALKERS #1
GHOST RIDER #1 (conclusion!)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		HAPPY BIRTHDAY GENE COLAN 1	WALT SIMONSON 2	PAT GARRAHY PAT REDDING 3	KENNY LOPEZ PAUL SMITH 4	5
ARCHIE GOODWIN 6	 LABOR DAY	8	9	GERRY CONWAY 10	NEW THIS MONTH: **NIGHTSTALKERS** 	
13	JIM NOVAK 14	15	KEITH WILLIAMS KURT BUSIEK 16	DANNY FINGEROTH 17	18	19
DOUG HAZLEWOOD STEVE GERBER 20	**HAWKEYE** DEBUTS TALES OF SUSPENSE #57, 1964 		PETER DAVID 23	24	DAWN GEIGER 25	LOUISE SIMONSON 26
BOB SHAREN 27	28 ROSH HASHANAH	29	 30	0		